

PEACE

AND THE

VICES

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PEACE AND
THE VICES



PEACE AND THE VICES

BY

ANNA A. ROGERS

AUTHOR OF "SWEETHEARTS AND WIVES"

"The common notion that peace and the virtues of civil life flourished together, I found to be wholly untenable. Peace and the vices of civil life only flourish together."—RUSKIN.

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK ::::::::::::::: 1904

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To
THE MEMORY OF
MY MOTHER

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. SHORE DUTY ENDED BY ORDERS TO SEA	I
II. DORA'S SECRET	32
III. LIFE UNDER THE "LONE PINE"	51
IV. TWO CABLEGRAMS FROM HONG KONG	69
V. FELLOWES IS MISSING	93
VI. UNDER THE CAMPHOR-TREES	108
VII. KENT GOES DOWN TO HIS JUDGMENT	121
VIII. TOO MANY CHAPERONES	140
IX. UNDER ARREST	163
X. MAMMY SEES THE "WHITE LIGHT"	173
XI. THE FEAST OF LANTERNS	185
XII. THE COURT-MARTIAL CONVENES	205
XIII. A TEN O'CLOCK GUN	223
XIV. SECOND DAY OF THE COURT-MARTIAL	235
XV. A LAUGH AND A BLOW	249
XVI. LAST WEEKS IN NAGASAKI	267
XVII. THE WIFE'S REWARD	289

PEACE AND THE VICES

CHAPTER I

SHORE DUTY ENDED BY ORDERS TO SEA

"Some with lives that came to nothing, some with deeds as well undone."

IT was early June, and one of those warm, relaxing, humid days when Italy plucks at the sleeve allusively.

The Departments still impounded the human usury levied on the politicians by mongering constituencies. Speeding westward along the broad, deserted Avenue was a cable-car half-filled with the Capital's usual off-hour, off-season ethnologic medley.

Whites and blacks, and hybrids; a few rich, a few poor, the many in between. Belated marketers with bulging baskets from which came the crude odor of uncooked things; shoppers returning from a morning of soul-rending compromises, thankful to have saved car-fare from the frenzy.

In one corner huddled a shabby, uncatalogued

PEACE AND THE VICES

creature in pitiful, persistent mourning. She was old and broken, shrunk in a sort of fidgety stupor, the cause of which was supplied by the bloated face and vinous breath. The knotted fingers worked incessantly at the corner of her rusty cape.

Opposite her, and deploring it, was the familiar figure in Washington of a vulgar old dandy, dressed twenty years too youthfully and quite ten behind the fashion of the day. The former fact even he might have been brought to admit; in defence of the latter, he would have died. Day after day, in his goings and comings, he tested his waning attractiveness upon every pretty woman whose eyes he could impel; day after day, of late, the pathos of uncertainty was slowly turning into the grim tragedy of fact. And still he fought on bitterly against entire displacement in the eyes of the feminine world; where it could be humorously seen, he had once reigned in dwarfed surroundings. He felt the challenge in the brutal youth and good looks of the entirely unconscious little attaché leaning against the doorway, at the end of the car, keeping his balance braced by one dark, well-kept, spatulate hand, on which were three rings. Every line of his face and perfectly clad figure was tense with his scorn of things American.

ORDERS TO SEA

Obliquely opposite the old beau, was a pair of pretty brown eyes that saw him not, never dreaming of the dire offence of blindness that would send him to his hall-bedroom home stricken, bent, haunted, cursing himself for so passionately caring.

The unwitting offender was a young woman, well-dressed, and fair to look upon, a face full of grave sweetness, strength, and sanity.

No life of them all, thus temporarily collocated, but was worth the telling, but hap-hazard from among that carful, the thread of one is lifted and followed for a little.

She of the madonna-like brow and eyes (who had seen no one in the car save the old tipsy woman drowsing in the corner beside her, over whom her regard brooded with a strange solicitude) got off at the Navy Department.

She walked lightly up the broad stairway, and in the great dim resounding corridor above, she took the elevator. On an upper floor she stopped at a door beside which sat an ancient messenger, who had seen six administrations come and go, and had learned the value of silence.

Greeting him familiarly, the young woman wrote something on her card, and said:

PEACE AND THE VICES

"Please, O'Rourke, take this in to my brother, Lieutenant Talty. Don't leave it, if he is not there."

After a moment he shuffled back, anxious for another word from the little lady who never forgot to ask about his rheumatism, in that soft voice that somehow gave one's private affairs their just importance.

But Lieutenant Talty, albeit short and stout, proved too quick for him, and called out over O'Rourke's stooping shoulders:

"Hullo, Dora! What's up? What will Fellows say to your coming alone to the Department and sending brazenly in for the best-looking chap in the building, eh?"

She smiled, placed her hand on his arm, saying:

"Jack, I must see you at once about—something. Where can we go?"

"That spells lunch! An ice-cream soda wouldn't fill the bill?" he coaxed.

"Listen, Jack—I don't want to eat, I only want to talk."

"'Only!' and I so young, alone, and unprepared!"

"Do be serious. I want your advice."

"My what? At last I grasp the full horror of

ORDERS TO SEA

this scene! If I get out of this short of eighteen dollars, it will be due to a superior article in gray, hidden behind this Doric façade!" thumping his brow; then as he saw his sister's lips begin to tremble, he added hastily: "There, there, old girl! I'll be back in a minute, as soon as I shuffle off this official coil."

When he returned they went down together to the blazing entrance, whence they instinctively sought the cool shade and privacy of Lafayette Square at two in the afternoon.

Not until they were seated on one of the benches, did Dora Fellowes break into her brother's unremitting little stream of nonsense.

"Jack!" she ejaculated, and then withdrew into a reserve, evidently habitual, her eyes running swiftly from one object to another, as if again testing alternative exits that would leave her the great privilege of silence.

He turned and looked keenly at her, serious at last.

"Kent?" he asked. She nodded slowly, then bethought herself and cried out sharply:

"Oh, no! not what you are thinking. No!" she repeated with an indignation that made the man's eyes soften as he watched her.

PEACE AND THE VICES

"Do you think, Jack dear, it's wrong for a wife to ask advice in any private matter connected with her husband?" she finally asked.

"On the contrary, I could easily imagine times when it would be both weak and what you—bless your heart!—call wrong, not to. There are a lot of derelict ethics floating 'round loose, honey. Keep your rudder clear of 'em, if you can."

"Kent's orders came this morning."

"Well, he's been on the lookout for them for a month, I don't exactly see——"

"He's ordered to the Asiatic Station," she said slowly.

"To thunder he is! Why, Dora, he was slated for the Home Squadron—saw the detail myself! And the other night at the Army and Navy Club Rummels vowed——"

"Mr. Peterson wanted the 'Dolphin,' and Mr. Peterson of course got it. Senator Guppy, you know."

"Now, little woman, don't be nasty. If we had a Guppy we'd work him too!"

"What I want to know is: oughtn't I to go too? And if so, how can I make Kent consent to it?"

He faced her with sudden excitement.

ORDERS TO SEA

"Dora, listen to me! Let nothing keep you on this side of the world—nothing! There's no question about it."

"Unfortunately there are several questions about it. Oh, can't you see how complicated it is? I took it for granted I was to go, and he—you know how sensitive he is—he immediately thought I did not trust him. He will not look at it in any other light. And then he says we can't afford such a journey; and then there's baby—O Jack!" she turned her head away pressing her hands together nervously.

"I see, I see," he mused; adding suddenly:

"Now you brace up, old lady, and leave it to me—the whole thing. I give you my word of honor I'll not fail you. You play the pliable-wife act for a few days—all the same lay low and get ready to go. See? By the bye, how do the orders read?"

"'Take steamer sailing from San Francisco not later than June twenty-first.' Kent says he'll have to start a week from to-morrow."

"Dora—er—have you seen Imogen?"

"Not yet, I'm going there now."

"Well—" it was his turn to hesitate—"if I were you I'd sort of skim over this matter lightly

PEACE AND THE VICES

with her—very lightly indeed; and, Dora, don't say you've seen me to-day."

They arose and walked across the park to the carette station at the corner, and as he helped her in, he said abruptly:

"Jove, I forgot! what's the ship?"

"'Boston,' " she replied over her shoulder as the vehicle lumbered forward with a lurch. She turned and watched with loving eyes the sturdy little figure crossing the Avenue with the long disproportionate stride of a man who lives in habitual protest against a small and unworthy exterior.

At the red brick boarding-house on a side street, Mrs. Fellowes rang ineffectually many times before the colored maid opened the door. There was about her a certain smiling familiarity of manner that was not without interest to one not living in daily contact with it. After a still longer delay, the response to Dora's inquiry wandered back:

"Mrs. Talty's out. She's been out all day, 'Liza she says, m'm."

As Mrs. Fellowes went down the steps, a voice came from within raised in song, dying away as the maid sauntered back to her ever-belated work, which she tasted slowly as if it were pleasure, instead.

ORDERS TO SEA

Dora Fellowes returned to the Navy Yard and turning to the right from the gate, she soon came in sight of her veranda, where a girl's white-clad figure was pacing back and forth with a baby in her arms.

"How's she been?" called out the young mother as she opened the low iron gate, and smiled up into the bright face of her young sister, who had made her home with her since their father's death two years before.

"Lift not the curtain from a fearful past, fond mamma! Be thankful with me, she's like a mouse now—sound."

"Now, Dell, was she really troublesome?" was asked incredulously, as the mother took the child hungrily into her arms, and sat down then and there for a loving inspection of her treasure.

"'Was she troublesome!' My dear, I'm a wreck, a neurasthenic wreck! Look at that hand!" exclaimed Dell, holding it out for inspection and burlesquing agitation.

"Nonsense! Of course she is heavy for her age."

The girl lifted both hands in speechless recognition of the irremediable, and turned away and seated herself upon the low rail of the veranda.

PEACE AND THE VICES

The only points of resemblance between Adele Talty and her older sister lay in the extreme sensibility of both their faces, and in their voices, strongly southern in accent.

Miss Talty's greatest external credential was her coloring, not having really much more regularity of feature than Jack himself.

A pile of glistening reddish-brown hair; eyes that matched with jet black lashes and eyebrows; a clear, very pale skin; vividly scarlet lips, all went to produce an almost artificial effect, in the contention of a few people—but who has not his detractors, even in a Navy Yard?

It is almost unnecessary to add that she had actively detested her own particular type of undeniable beauty all her life, vanity among women taking much more often the negative form of self-depreciation than the positive one commonly accorded to it.

"See Jack's wife?" the girl asked, swinging a tennis-clad foot.

"No, I called, but Imogen, as usual, was out."

"Well, you were gone long enough to have both seen and—*heard* her. At least so it struck my febrile fancy with Julie yelling in my ears like an adult fog-horn."

ORDERS TO SEA

"O Dell!"

"O Dora! I'll leave it to Doctor Robb; he came in to see what on top of creation was the matter with her."

"He may have come in, but that wasn't his reason, miss."

"If you insist on details, here they are! At ten minutes past two, the hour-hand and the minute-hand settled right down together for a gossip and a dish of tea, or a late lunch—I could not quite make it out—all I'm sure about is that there they sat, and hobnobbed for two hours—two—I sha'n't take off a second. And the entire time Julie was black in the face touched up with purple polka dots; and I was sage-green and white, in stripes; the doctor particularly dwelt upon it with scientific interest. I'm astonished you didn't hear her yourself, my dear."

"Dell, you are worse than Jack! I never saw such a pair of clowns as you two are when you once get started."

"My angel, haven't you observed that we Taltys do everything well, even to playing the fool? Of course you are not as talented as we are—Jack and I—but in your own obscure way you are just as thorough."

PEACE AND THE VICES

Dora said nothing then, nor during the evening, of her visit to the Department.

After luncheon, two days later, the sisters were sitting together embarked upon the wide sea of dress discussion, surrounded by a fog of pale *écru* point d'esprit.

"Red, with your hair?" ventured Mrs. Fellowes with proper timidity, when her sister announced with the aggressiveness of secret doubt, a projected garniture of scarlet geranium.

"'Red with my hair!' 'Repeat your color,' says a nation that ought to know; and I say again, 'I shall be a dream!' Perhaps a trifle feverish, I'll admit. But I do nothing thoughtlessly—there is a man going to this hop whose sleep I have never disturbed. I've marked him for insomnia's own. This confection, with me for a 'filling,' is about to accomplish it." As she said the last word there was a loud ringing of the front-door bell, that had its own voice differentiated from that of all others, after the manner of bells; and before the housemaid could by any human possibility finish doing that one thing that seems to become vitally essential when a household bell sounds, there came a louder peal.

"Imogen!" said Dell with conviction, her hands raised in despair.

ORDERS TO SEA

"Now, don't tease her, Dell," begged Dora drearily.

"That great camelopard of a thing!" scorned the other.

"O girls! have you heard?" came in resonant tones from the hall below before the front door was fairly ajar. There was a great rustling of draperies, a stumbling step running up the stairs, and a very tall, very thin woman burst in upon them. Her hat was awry on her small head, her black hair hung in strings all around her sallow face and neck. She had huge faded gray eyes with dilated pupils; a large nervous mouth which had an exaggerated looseness of movement. Her voice was unexpectedly deep.

Before any greetings were exchanged, she tumbled into a chair and gasped:

"Jack's ordered to Asia!"

"You mean Kent, Imogen. I went to tell you day before yesterday but——"

"I mean my husband—Jack Talty!" was reiterated wildly.

Dora looked quickly up from her work. Dell went quietly on measuring off the net for a final flounce, holding it to her nose-tip with the left hand, and stretching it out along her right arm

PEACE AND THE VICES

with a repeated sweep, counting in a detached monotone: "five, six, seven, eight——"

"I've just come from the Secretary!" announced Mrs. Talty, spurred to it by the failure to produce the effect she expected.

"Imogen!" cried both sisters, Dora in reproach, Dell in evident anger, her hands dropping to her sides, as she stood glaring at her sister-in-law.

"Yes, and he was just as nice as could be, and such a smile!"

"I can readily imagine you brought out the——er——sunny side of his nature!" muttered Dell.

"He had on one of those new sporty waistcoats that made me feel at home with him at once, and——"

"Just why?" snapped Dell.

"And so I was perfectly frank with him—in fact he became interested and drew me out, no one could have listened more cordially. Jack's entitled to six months more shore duty; and there are men who haven't smelt sea-air for five years right here under his very nose. Oh, yes, and he asked their names and I gave them! And then Jack was out on that horrid old station before, where during the rainy season you can pick mushrooms off your best shoes every morning."

ORDERS TO SEA

"How convenient!"

"Oh, you needn't stand there, Adele Talty, with that superior smile. You haven't scraped the mildew off your face in Hong Kong before you could get down to washing it; and sent to the oven for a dress to get into and rush to a tea before it wilts again! You haven't flopped about between Chemulpo, and Shanghai, and Tientsin and hardly time for laundrying!"

"Did the Secretary perchance hear any of this?" teased the red-haired one.

"Why, of course! And I know he was impressed because he rang his bell and told the messenger to say he was engaged. And then I ended by reminding him that Jack comes up for examination for his next grade in six months. Why everything's against his going."

"Except the fact that he was ordered," suggested Dell coldly.

"The worst of it is I can feel it in my bones——"

"Poor Imogen!"

"——that Jack's going. There's a look in his eyes that I know——" her voice broke and tears began to well up and overflow. Soon she was full length upon the lounge, weeping without restraint.

Dell swept up her belongings and left the room.

PEACE AND THE VICES

Imogen had been hopelessly on her nerves for five years; they had not a thought in common except their mutual dislike.

Mrs. Fellowes breathed more easily after her sister had gone, and essayed the soothing of the supine figure of woe.

Presently Dora suggested, her intent always kindly :

“Kent has to go too, Imogen.”

Mrs. Talty sat bolt upright.

“Kent’s entirely different. His time is up for sea, he’s never been out there! It’s cholera, typhoons, earthquakes, or missionaries, in one endless round. They persist—I mean the missionaries—in going to China and saving souls that don’t in the least want to be saved (and what’s more oughtn’t to be, if there’s going to be any really nice society in heaven!). Then comes ‘murder and sudden death’ and no time for ‘battle’ and a ship is sent to restore order, and the wardroom have to give up their state-rooms to the women and children and live like pigs in a poke—what on earth’s a poke, Dora? I ask you, Dora Fellowes, then what happens? Our poor boys are maligned as a godless lot of heathens, and prayed for at meetings—openly prayed for! Can you imagine such ingratitude?”

ORDERS TO SEA

"Imogen, my dear!" laughed Dora.

Mrs. Talty had talked herself into her normal degree of composure, and at last the other asked the questions that stirred within her:

"What ship is Jack ordered to?"

"The same one that Kent is under orders for—the 'Boston.' "

Dora's face flushed with rising emotion.

"When did he tell you?"

"Yesterday evening. He came home very late from the Department. What upset me was the queer way he actually urged me to stay home this time. As if I'd let him go out there alone! Dora—" she suddenly interjected, leaning forward and touching her companion's knee—"the women out there, the Europeans, flirt like the very—well, they do! Go? I'd go if I had elephantiasis, neuritis, and creeping necrosis all over me—I don't know what any of them are, but they sound awful—and still I'd go!"

Dora had heard nothing since the direct answers to her questions, and sat saying over and over to herself:

"Dear, dear old Jack! He has sacrificed himself for my sake."

Before Imogen left, Kent Fellowes came in with

PEACE AND THE VICES

his brother-in-law, Jack, who announced that he was going to stay to dinner and settle their plans, once for all.

Lieutenant Fellowes was a tall spare man, with a between-deck stoop of the high shoulders; a keen grave, tense face, with sad eyes. A silent man with helpful sympathetic ways about his house. His thin conic-fingered hands were endlessly restless.

Jack assured his wife at once that there was no chance whatever of the revocation of his orders, and if she cared to go again out to the despised station, all she had to do was to get ready—he would sail with Kent on the twenty-first.

Thereupon Imogen became hysterical, and among other things, her visit to the Secretary of the Navy came out quite against her intention. The others incontinently fled from the room, almost falling over one another in their eagerness.

Talty's ruddy face slowly paled, he looked up and down his tall wife's comfortless figure in helpless fury. Then without a word he stalked to the window and drummed on the panes with his pudgy little hands.

Imogen followed and stood stricken beside him. By far the most wearing feature of Talty's misalliance was the fact that his wife loved him.

ORDERS TO SEA

"Jack, please speak to me! Swear, if you want to! only say something to me."

"I have nothing new to say, Imogen."

"I did it impulsively, you know my way."

"So?" There was a silence and then he turned and said harshly:

"Will you never comprehend that the one thing I will not stand is your fingers meddling in my official life? This is the second time that you have dared to— Oh, what earthly use is it to talk to you!" He turned away abruptly and left the room, joining Fellowes in his den, where together they packed books and pictures until dinner-time. It was about all the packing there was to be done, the furniture in the quarters belonging to the Government.

Then dinner was announced and served by a tall, very erect, very black negress, dressed in black relieved by a spotless white kerchief, deep cuffs, and apron; about her very well-shaped head was tied a white silk bandanna, two ends of which stood up in front like a rabbit's ears listening.

At the table one place remained empty, and Dora, who looked a little weary, explained that Imogen had a slight headache and did not care for any dinner.

PEACE AND THE VICES

There was a moment's silence as the soup was served, during which the thought vibrations in the room seemed almost phonetic, and the family avoided one another's eyes.

While Lieutenant Fellowes was carving the roast, Jack said aside to Dora:

"I believe, if you'll excuse me, I'll run up and see how her head is."

When he had gone, the three looked up and exchanged glances, and Kent said:

"If ever there was a masculine angel—" leaving the sentence unfinished.

After dinner, over their cigars, Talty remarked mendaciously to Fellowes:

"It looks as if we'd have to give in to the girls, and take them along, doesn't it, old man?" Lowering his voice he added with a roguish eye, before the other could reply:

"The fact is, Imogen has got it into her head that I'm a sort of suppressed Lovelace (wasn't that the name of that dead game sport of the last century?) and that all I'm waiting for is a chance. She's not going to give it to me this cruise, that's sure! I—" he laughed comfortably—"I've often wondered, Kent, why marriage seems largely to slay the power of woman over a man; I don't

ORDERS TO SEA

go further than 'largely,' please note. Is it because it concentrates it, or because it destroys it?"

"Depends a little on the wife perhaps—either way," laughed Kent.

"I dare say," grudged the other, suddenly realizing that the bachelor rights to generalization anent matrimony were no longer his.

"Why, I'd rather talk tobacco or even weather, with a man, than sit under a May moon and exchange goo-goo eyes with Cleopatra herself, or—or any of those old girls."

"There was a time, Jack—" suggested Kent darkly, smiling as he knocked the ashes off his cigar end, with a nervous little finger.

"And that traitor sitting there (smoking one of my cigars, be it observed) calls himself friend!" Jack apostrophized the ceiling with bitterness.

After a short silence Talty threw his cigar into the empty grate, sat up and took out his note-book energetically.

"Look here, Kent, I've been making some calculations. Our mileage to San Francisco is two hundred and sixty dollars. That will pay most of Dora's and Imogen's expenses. Then they are allowed two hundred and fifty pounds apiece trans-Pacific baggage, as well as ourselves, so the wom-

PEACE AND THE VICES

en-folks will be very little expense by rail. And the steam-ship company gave my wife, last time, missionary rates—half-fare; and I'm blest if she didn't tell the agent she saw no reason they shouldn't; it was only the difference between looking after souls in retail and wholesale! That's the fine thing about Imogen, she knows the ropes like a C. S. C. with stripes to his elbows. Why, Kent, that woman knows more about the Navy than any man in the service. She watches every private bill before Congress, and knows who's boosting it along; the animus of the House on appropriation bills; the bias *pro* or *con* of the Naval committee, and who holds the deciding vote, how he'll place it, and by George, why! Such trifles as my exact place on the list, the average percentages of retirements and casualties (she's downright spooky about casualties) are as easy to her as (now what's that mysterious thing women do with yarn? You know they sit and count the stitches of it, and chatter like magpies about something else the whole blamed time) crocheting? Well, you ought to know, Dora does it—well, an hour back I was saying that Navy politics and policies were that easy to Imogen. I'll get her some day to show you her Register—ordinary Egyptian hieroglyphics aren't in it."

ORDERS TO SEA

Nothing in life seemed to Kent more pathetic than Jack's inviolable loyalty to his wife, in face of long dead illusions.

"And Dora doesn't know a paymaster from a surgeon by his collar device," Fellowes said with obvious complacency.

"Well, with Imogen to run us, we can get out there without drawing more than two months' advance pay. A 'deadhorse' of that size is easily worked off out there. No crowned heads to be fêted to the glory of Uncle Sam, at our expense, as in Europe. Great country, ours, Kent, but she isn't above letting her 'servants' stand treat, is she? England pays less wages, but signs her own club dues, bless her!"

"We'll get there by and by," came dubiously from his companion, carefully inserting his inch length of tobacco into his amber mouth-piece.

"Yes, but we won't *be* there, by and by, you and I!"

"Well, I suppose they'd all better go," assented Kent presently.

Jack rubbed his fat hands together joyfully under his coat-tails as he stood from habit, before a fireless hearth.

"Dell's quite wild about it, and is going to take Mammy along for the general comfort of us all.

PEACE AND THE VICES

I don't suppose, as she has her own purse, we can very well object, and they'll both help Dora with baby." Jack threw down his last card with a bold front.

When they joined the others on the veranda, they found them attacking the same subject from a purely feminine stand-point, and a resurrected Imogen had the floor:

"You remember my old black armure silk, Dora? The one I sponged off with beer before I went out last time? I made it over with a guimpe and belt of cut jet, remember? I thought you would. Well, I had not been in Yokohama a month (at that hotel that burned down later—what was the name? It began with a W. Jack, surely you remember!). Well, never mind: one day I opened my trunk—the big wicker one I got at the Bon Marché, Dora, you always raved over that top tray—and at once a ghastly odor came forth, and I plunged in, and found at the bottom, three inches of gray fungus. Between the beer and the dampness it was worse than spoiled, it was putrid! I got the coolie to bury it."

"Well, now that it has gone to its long rest, perhaps you'll tell us what we'll need in the way of clothes, anything?"

ORDERS TO SEA

"There, Dell! that's exactly what makes the residents out there so furious! The way women, bringing letters to them, persist in going out in a steamer-trunk containing two shirt-waists and one old high-necked Navy blue foulard, and wearing a golf suit and a last year's hat—and then bragging the whole blessed time about the clothes they left at home, and rushing to Chinese tailors to get something suitable for the Imperial Flower Viewings, or the ball to meet Prince This or That. Why, it's the greatest station for clothes! We must take all our evening toilets, whatever else we leave behind; and something giddy for afternoon teas; and as many hats as we can jam in. Oh, yes! and gloves and shoes to burn."

A short altercation followed between Imogen and Adele, into which Dora's soft voice interposed peace, and Mrs. Talty was once more launched and merrily on her way.

"Then another thing: you must decide where you'll settle on the station. It's the only way. I tried knocking about for one awful year, and it played the very——"

"Imogen!" warned Jack, persistently masterful in minor matters at least.

"I was only going to say 'dickens'! And you

PEACE AND THE VICES

know perfectly well, John Talty, that I had to have Ah Ling six weeks—the fat old Chinese nurse who paid two hundred and eighty Mexicans for a small-footed wife for her son, truth, my dear!”

“You were talking of the settling question,” interposed Adele firmly. The two men sat in that expedient silence induced by a profound sense of inferiority in the world feminine.

“Oh, yes, so I was! Well, I can’t decide it positively until after I’ve met and studied the admiral. They all have fads, admirals, you know. Corea was the hobby of the one last time. You remember, Jack? I rather thought you would. If we only have the luck to strike one with a *penchant* for Japan! There was one once. How is old Titterington on that, boys? Just give me half an hour with him, and Jack not around making faces at me, and I’ll settle the whole question.”

“I do wish I had your tact about some things,” Adele felt compelled to contribute.

Imogen glanced suspiciously at her sister-in-law in the half-light and then continued with a slight retrenchment of tone:

“It’s knowing the ropes, that’s all. I study up on the Anglo-Russian, Chino-Corean-Japanese

ORDERS TO SEA

cutthroat game, and all the other combinations or alienations, and then when I meet the commander-in-chief I stamp 'round heavily till I step on whatever's his hobby and get a rise. Then I know what's ahead of us. See? The heat will be terrific just now, and I propose, till September or October, that we go down to Yukosuka and take a temple——"

"Do what?"

"Rent a temple and stay till it gets cooler."

"Buddha for a summer-boarder!" shrieked Dell in delight.

"No, no—gentlemanly landlord!" chirped Dora gayly.

"Esoterics scrambled on toast for breakfast; Vedantism *frappé* for a light hot-weather tiffin; and Nirvana *pièce montée* for dinner, with a thick cream sauce," Jack continued with unction.

"And fat old Hotei for punkah-wallah!" contributed Kent, the devourer of books.

Imogen waited mirthlessly until the Taltys emerged from one of their fusillades of nonsense, which they at least heartily relished.

"Do they really do it?" Dora finally asked, moved by her sister-in-law's peevish silence.

"Why, of course. I spent a month in one, our

PEACE AND THE VICES

last cruise; our consul's sister and I took it together. We just looked about till we saw a temple we took a fancy to, then we hunted up the priest and bought him. Then we got the temple furniture cleared away, and there we were, matting and all! And you poke in the walls as you need them."

"What darksome deed is covered by that, think you?" interrupted Adele, and before she and Jack had emptied their overflowing horn of nonsense, Imogen arose, crossly demanded her hat and her husband, and said good-night, and went back to the city.

Dell flew upstairs to dress for the weekly hop in the sail-loft, leaving the husband and wife alone on the piazza. Kent drew his chair nearer Dora's and leaning toward her whispered:

"I suppose you will not let me kiss you out here, wee wifie mine? Well, then give me your hand." He took and caressed it, pressing it gently against his cheek.

"I love you more and more, dear, every day more and more. I wish to heaven I had it in me to be worthy of you!" he suddenly added with bitterness. To turn his thought she said lightly:

"I think poor Imogen makes a splendid back-

ORDERS TO SEA

ground for her sex generally. I've always noticed you have a burst of admiration for your wife after a visit from Jack's."

Laughing they arose and went into the house.

Adele wore that night her experiment in daring coloration with such marked success that she received two cordial invitations to remain in America. One was extended by Ensign Golden, the leader of the cotillon, the other by the assistant surgeon at the Yard, Doctor Robb—his second attempt in the same line.

But the doctor went home early, and the cotillon was not considered at all up to Golden's standard; the whole Yard felt that his indifference and lassitude were insufferable, if not downright impertinent, and the very next hop found him displaced by a man of sustained enthusiasm, if of far less originality.

"I'll admit, Doctor Robb, I think you must be an acquired taste," Adele had vouchsafed after his avowal that night, between dances before the German began. They sat in the corner of a beflagged, besabred loft, hidden by an enormous expansion of Stars and Stripes, whose folds billowed dizzily about them in the current of warm air blowing from many open windows.

PEACE AND THE VICES

As he was beyond asking any more questions that evening, she had to continue unsolicited:

"I observe that I let you go with more and more regret as years advance. It honestly wouldn't surprise me if—" she paused, but again entire silence defeated her rather hazy motives—"if as time rolls on and The Other cometh not between us twain, and you'd catch me in exactly the right mood and give me the chance, that—really I mean it!"

"Well, it's the last call for dinner, Miss Talty!" he said grimly. She laughed, humor being in her very blood, relishing a man who was game to the end. She put out her gloved hand, laid one finger gently on his own and coaxed from the pure habit of coquetry:

"Och, dochter de-ah, shure it's beginnin' Oi am this blissed minute to fale the hunger!"

He sprang to his feet, white with indignation, and standing before her he said furiously:

"All that so-called good women of your sort lack, who pass from one safe flirtation to another, is courage—to come under quite another caption! The wish to make you my wife was the most sacred thing in me; the deepest, strongest, cleanest—it deserves at least respect. Good-night and

ORDERS TO SEA

good-by, I shall not see you again before you leave," he bowed, turned on his heel and left her.

Tears rushed to her eyes, the hot color to her cheeks, she shrank as if struck.

"This is our extra, Miss Talty. I like the way you are trying to sneak out of it! It's a blow to a man whose two-step has a national reputation," cried a voice close beside her; and fighting comically with, instead of for, the enveloping flag of his country, Ensign Golden swept her away out upon the glassy floor.

Four days later the party of seven started on their long journey to the other ends of the earth, with far less commotion than a respectable average leave for the sea-shore.

The most amusing incident of the voyage was the discovery that Mammy had in her possession a twenty-two calibre pistol, supposing that they were going to the land of savagery; instead of in reality the land of gentlest courtesy, of quaintest ceremony—the heaven of children and flowers.

CHAPTER II

DORA'S SECRET

“How love might be, hath been indeed and is.”

FELLOWES and Talty had been classmates at Annapolis and close friends ever since. A friendship which had stood the test of a cruise together in the woful cementation of the steerage mess, as it was in the old days. Fellowes was, in all respects but one, Talty's ideal of an officer, rarely efficient, almost fanatic in his devotion to the service; and of a gentleman—well-bred, loyal, honorable.

For a healthy sanguine nature like Talty's (with an inherent love of detail and adapting itself easily to every environment) the long period of preparedness for war, which best seems to insure peace in these sapient days, carried with it no dangers. But Fellowes had a temperament strung up for action, for the full testing of twenty years of theory; a mind that looked off over wide spaces, beyond the minutiae of foreground that make for

DORA'S SECRET

sanity. He felt even under the padding of his daily paper the ribs of history, to be studied later by his children's children. Perhaps a blooded horse gathered for tremendous effort and then suddenly checked, best offers a parallel of outraged spirit and maddened nerves.

In one of these reactions on his first cruise as an ensign in the days of the "Hump in the Line," a pre-natal weakness, lying till then sleeping within him, awoke; and a fight, which left life-long scars, was on his hands; a conflict barren of glory; his own soul the battle-field, ploughed up and riven by bitter strife.

It was "a fine old gentlemanly vice" transmitted by his maternal grandfather, the only legacy he left. He had been himself in the United States Navy during the Mexican War, and had died suddenly three months after the declaration of peace.

It was always peace, not war, that wrought disaster with the Fellowes men.

For a hundred years, here and there in a generation, there had ever been a man carrying the poison of drink in his blood. Kent's father was entirely free from it—the boy was placed under the rigid discipline of the Naval Academy at fifteen, never again returning to his home in St. Louis except

PEACE AND THE VICES

as a hurried guest. Thus he was left in ignorance of family traditions, and off his guard, until too late.

Kent met Dora Talty on his graduation leave, one week of which he spent with Jack in his home in Richmond. And now and then he was again thrown with her during a cruise on the Home Station, at Old Point, Charleston, and New Orleans during the Mardi Gras.

Toward the end of that cruise the two classmates were on deck one night, tramping out together the mid-watch.

The ship, under orders for the winter cruise, was off Staten Island to take on powder. Life seemed very simple, very plastic, during those silent peaceful hours while the great world slept under the stars, and the ship rode at anchor, at war only with the tide.

After a long silence, Kent said bluntly:

"Jack, knowing me as only you do, answer me square. Do you think I have a right to marry?"

And Talty with that half-comprehension of the relentlessness of nature's laws, with which we stumble through our youth, said impulsively:

"The one thing that will pull you up, old chap!"

DORA'S SECRET

And Dora worked off the penalty for that short sentence. Kent wrote to her the next day, and all the rest followed, when the cruise was over.

Two years before, Jack also had married, greatly to his own surprise. It was the result of an indiscreet pity for a hysterical, anæmic girl who clung convulsively to anything stable that floated by her in the tossing rapids of her emotional life. Although it be not in accord with the traditions, the truth is that the most vulnerable man in existence, to feminine charms—real or fancied—the least cool in judgment, is a Naval officer fresh from a cruise.

About a year after Dora's marriage, Kent, then on shore duty at the Washington Navy Yard, was ordered to New York on court-martial duty, his first separation from his wife even for a day. When Talty, who was in the office of Naval Intelligence in Washington, heard that Willoughby T. Hanks was on the same court, he experienced his first twinge of anxiety about his brother-in-law since the marriage. Lieutenant Hanks' superb health, of mind and body, was a living refutation of all croakings, religious or hygienic. He left whatever physical debts might accrue to be paid by unborn descendants, for whom he could scarcely

PEACE AND THE VICES

be expected to feel any great tenderness. He was a magnificent pagan, bent upon the making of proselytes—very dangerous company for Kent Fellowes.

Talty read in the evening paper before leaving the Department, that the court had adjourned in New York on the previous day, and he gave his wife one of those connubial slips made facile by certain classic shibboleths, and went on his wheel down to the Navy Yard.

Up to that time Dora never even dreamed of the volcano upon whose sunny slopes she had planted her heart's vineyard—with a laugh, and a prayer, and the sense of peace that walks with a great love.

The instant Jack saw his sister that afternoon, his heart stood still with convicted dread.

She had seen him coming and stood in her open doorway.

"O Jack, I'm so glad you came! I'm worried to death about Kent. He got back late last night in a high fever. He's sleeping so heavily, all flushed and burning. Do please go right up and see him."

The evident gravity with which Talty entered and put down his hat, soothed at once the excited

wife. As he stooped to unfasten the bicycle-clips from his trousers he asked:

"You didn't think it necessary to send for a doctor?"

"Why, yes—" Jack held his breath, but exhaled it in resonant relief as she added:

"But Dell made such fun of me, I waited. I should have sent for Doctor Robb last night after I had helped Kent upstairs—think of it, Jack, I had to help him, he was so dazed with the fever! But Dell came out of her room, and said all the poor fellow needed was sleep, and for gracious sake to let him have it in peace! He is better to-day, undoubtedly, but sleeps so soundly. So I sent Dell to the doctor's office, but she came back saying Doctor Robb had gone to the city, and she has no confidence whatever in the 'big' doctor. And O Jack, I forgot! The captain of the Yard sent for Kent this morning. Dell spoke to the messenger—she said I'd exaggerate Kent's illness, and have a medical survey sitting on him, first thing I knew. A lot of papers are here for Kent to sign, and I hated to rouse him. You'll see to it all, and straighten things out for us?"

"I'll see to it all, dear," repeated he gravely. Then and there it began to be borne in upon him

PEACE AND THE VICES

that he had assumed a great moral responsibility that dwarfed even his own witless marriage.

He began to pace slowly, up and down the hall, with head bent, until Dora cried amazed:

"Why, aren't you going up to see what's the matter with poor Kent?"

"Oh, yes!" he said, recalling himself to the burden of the moment. "Don't come up, stay here."

"Why?" she demanded, in wonder.

"Well, you see I'm much more likely to get at the truth if I see him alone. To me he will not pretend to be any more chipper than he really is. I'll not be long."

He went slowly up the stairway, opened a door and entered, closing and locking it after him.

The sound of heavy stertorous breathing came from the bed in the darkened room, and now and then a long sigh that was almost a groan.

Raising one of the window-shades Jack approached the bed.

With one bare glance down at the flushed disfigured face, he turned abruptly away.

"God in heaven, it has come!" he muttered in a whisper.

He went to the window, staring out with the

DORA'S SECRET

blank eyes of introspection, and during the ensuing ten minutes he fitted a new burden to his shoulders—the real Kent, proud, sensitive, unselfish, fastidious almost to a fault, loving his young wife profoundly; the Kent lying there in a drunken stupor.

And innocent, flower-like, gentle little Dora! Purblind fool that he had been to sacrifice his sister to his friend, in one of those obsessions of sympathy that seemed doomed to wreck his own life and the lives of those he loved.

The only expiation possible was to stand between Dora and the vice itself; and between his friend and the consequences, as far as lay in his power, from that hour on to the end.

The almost insurmountable difficulties of this were not lost upon his quickened imagination; the close contact with men whose official duty it is to demand of one another the highest possible standard of conduct; the publicity of life in the Navy afloat or ashore. By his marriage he had become part of the great staid social system, thereby doubling the chances of discovery. The end seemed inevitable save by a miracle.

Talty once more approached the bed and made a fruitless attempt to rouse Fellowes, but the poison

PEACE AND THE VICES

in him had the exaggerated effect upon him that it often has in the case of a transmitted vice.

Talty opened both windows, drew in the shutters, covered the prostrate figure with an additional blanket, and with one agonized glance at his unconscious friend, he left the room.

After listening over the balusters for an instant, he tip-toed to Adele's room at the other end of the upper hall. He tapped softly, whispering, as he heard the handle turn:

"Dell, it's Jack! Open the door quickly."

She did so, and they stood face to face, each pair of eyes on guard, fencing with the truth. There had always been something clairvoyant in the action between their minds, there never was the least use to try concealment.

A man seldom appears to less advantage than when fighting for self-justification with a good woman, roused, and rolling down bowlders of infallibility from the higher levels where such women live out their sheltered lives. Until parley can be had more on his level, there is little to do but wait, under cover.

She beckoned him in and closed the door.

"How long have you known this, Jack?" were her first words.

DORA'S SECRET

"From the first, but, Dell, listen——"

"Before Dora's marriage?"

"Before their marriage."

"Oh, I see! a sister crucified to save a classmate. You're a good friend, Jack, at least. But how could you, how could you?" the girl walked about excitedly striking one closed fist into her open palm.

"I thought—I hoped——"

"Of course you did! All blunders are built on those two corner-stones. What amazes me is that your mind could twist itself into believing it possible; the fact that your ethics could foist the experiment upon your sister is secondary, bad as it is. To use a woman's life as a moral lever to turn a man from a sinner to a saint! Would you recommend the reversed rôle to any man of your long list of friends? It's one of the 'female parts' in the comedy, it seems!"

"When you are through, Dell—and you're dead right about the whole thing—I have something to say."

The rare sight of her brother's grave white face silenced her as no argument could have done; and presently he added:

"We Taltys have got to pull together now, not

PEACE AND THE VICES

against one another. Officially it shall be my task, socially yours. Go on, Dell, as you've so ably begun. Of course I see your cognizant touch in all that about the doctors—everything, since last night."

"I think, Jack, she had much better be told at once. The danger is trebled by her very ignorance."

"To him, yes; but to her, Dell—think a moment!"

"You're right, for a little while longer we must keep it from her until——"

"I will see him through this, she need not know. But the marvel of her not knowing, Dell! I cannot understand it, you knew!"

"Dora's nature has an affinity only for light, truth, order, beauty, harmony. I have sometimes thought the very force of her idealizing thought created these along her path, and killed all else. For instance, Mammy never used to let Dora see the—what shall I call it?—the sinuosities of her nature. She always used to say——"

"Dell! I've got it. Send for Mammy Lina! I'll share her wages with you, and I'll write and wheedle Cousin Cartright into giving her up for awhile anyhow. It was understood she was to

DORA'S SECRET

come if any of us wanted her. She's the smoothest thing in liars alive! There's a heap of it ahead of us. Her talent may as well be utilized, even if not really encouraged. Ah, it's not simple—life—it's not simple."

There was a short silence between them, and he continued his quarter-deck turn up and down the room; then suddenly he stopped before her and poured out the whole story of his intense love for his friend; his honest belief that the marriage would redeem him; the great shock of the failure they were now facing; ending, as he turned abruptly away from her, in almost incoherent self-denunciation. All Adele's womanliness was at once enlisted on her brother's side, and her tact—almost flawless when she chose to use it—soon quieted him and made it possible for him to descend with her and rejoin the impatient wife.

"What does Kent say?" she cried at once.

"You've never been a judge advocate on a ten days' court, Dora, or you wouldn't have to ask that question. A fellow's either lucky or lazy if he gets any sleep under the P.M. invoice. He's all right; dead tired, and seems to have taken cold, wants sleep; be all right to-morrow. Lord love us! even that other perfect man, Romeo, had dyspepsia and megrims——"

PEACE AND THE VICES

“——and insomnia,” suggested Dell, mechanically returning his lead; and their cross-ruff soon had pliable, happy-natured Dora in a gale of protesting laughter, as they belittled and held up to ridicule her wifely alarms.

“No wonder Kent calls you two ‘Bones and Tambourine’!” she finally managed to say, wiping her pretty brown eyes.

“Meaning her as the latter!” clamored Jack, patting a portly frontage, and strutting offensively to countervail a face still white with anguish and eyes that wept inwardly.

Adele went uptown to spend the night with Mrs. Talty, the only way to insure her sister-in-law’s absence, and gain her husband’s presence at the Yard over night.

The birth of his little daughter, Julie, three months after the disastrous home-coming from the court-martial, kept Fellowes’ path free from even temptation for almost a year. Then came a day when the child’s life hung by a thread.

All had been done that could be, and there was nothing for it but to wait, and try and read the doctor’s face stooping over the gasping child. The tension, his utter uselessness, days of hasty and irregular meals, drove the half-frantic father

downstairs, where he drank two glasses of port, toward dawn.

To touch one drop was fatal to him, and it was ten days before he was again entirely himself; although going and coming on his daily round, and sluggishly thankful that his child was living.

It was during one of those days that Dora suddenly came to, at least, a partial comprehension of the truth; deeming it a single indiscretion induced by excitement.

What day or hour it reached her consciousness, Adele never knew, the wife's subterfuge was so instinct with it.

But her dry alert eyes, the lines on the smooth girlish brow, stencilling themselves deeper and deeper as the weeks went on, the pitiful attempts at a no longer genuine gayety, drove Adele to a decision, indorsed by her brother. She went south on a series of visits among her many relations in the old city of her birth.

The family residence of her parents, neither of whom was living, was then in the hands of a collateral branch of her father's family; there only she did not go, even turning away her head whenever they drove by, and they all understood and sympathized.

PEACE AND THE VICES

When she deemed that her absence had relieved her sister of the first great strain of readjustment to a new and grievous condition, she returned north, and with her an old negress, whose grandfather had been sold to the ante-bellum Taltys straight from the slave-ship which had brought him over from Africa. Mammy Lina was of pure negro blood, with full brownish lips, a flattened nose, and hair like dyed sea-moss. A fine strong black cruel face, softened by inexpressibly sad loving eyes; and a voice that held in solution every human emotion, good or bad. An exquisite voice that coaxed or commanded, sympathized or repelled, loved unto death, hated in like measure, rippled in delicious laughter or became merely sibilant in wordless rage. To have seen and heard her formless crooning over the Talty babies as they had come one by one into her childless life, was to have a sudden vision of a cleared space in a jungle, where all young life survived only at the price of a ceaseless vigilance. She had been named Carolina, but insisted on the prefix S. lest she should be taken for the worthless flotsam of a state further north, and deemed less aristocratic.

In the meanwhile, after a second lapse on Fellowes' part, Jack saw that he must break down

DORA'S SECRET

the pitiful wall of deception Dora had jealously built between her secret and the whole prying world. She was not in the least one of those unrecorded heroines who fight, with a smile ready always on their lips, deceiving successfully as long as life is in them; only in the facial helplessness of death, laying bare the ravages of their agony. So when her brother told Dora that he had long been aware of her husband's weakness, she instantly clung to him infinitely relieved. He let pass without comment her piteous appeal that Adele should never know. Of course each time should be the last—Kent was as sure as she of that—to the end.

From the depression that inevitably followed upon each attack of Kent's drinking mania, it required all Dora's loving sympathy to drag him out sane.

Nothing but the genius of pure love gave her the penetration to attach him little by little once more to life; to reinstate some semblance of his shattered self-respect.

When the madness was passed, and he lay white and speechless in a hell of self-loathing, she sat beside him, letting him cling in almost a frenzy of humility to one of her hands; or gently forcing upon him much needed nutrition, a spoonful at a

PEACE AND THE VICES

time, in heart-breaking pretence of being happy to have him ill and helplessly dependent upon her. In fact a great exhilaration always came to her during the first days after they had together won the battle, and the craving began to abate in nausea and repulsion. Strangely enough (to the happy lives that have been spared contact with a great vice) those hours of sad victory knitted their two souls together in a bond infinitely profound, untranslatably exalted.

In these days of insistent pitiless individualism, it is difficult to win for such as Dora aught but contempt. Be that as it may, a few such women there ever have been, to whom "until death us do part" means more than until disillusion us do part, the new woman claiming an almost comical sex monopoly of a fairly common emotion.

When Kent's mental restlessness began (always before the physical) Dora read to him almost incessantly during his waking hours. As time went on, she discovered that he was best diverted by arctic adventures, or explorations into unknown lands, and eventually they had a very complete library of these tales, over which she drew a heavy curtain when all need of them was for the time being over. Then came his great bodily unrest,

DORA'S SECRET

during which she walked with him almost hourly, coming home only for meals, keeping her hat on all day; often falling asleep from sheer exhaustion as soon as she sat down. He was by no means a brute, but he found that to let her have her way with him was to minimize the strain upon her.

When he could speak at all it was to say:

"Don't read any more, dear, your voice is tired," or "My little wife, I cannot let you walk again with me this afternoon. Look at me, Dora, I promise you I will not go outside the Yard, if you will rest."

But there were club-rooms and thoughtless men to beat down convalescent resolve, and so she laughed and protested: "Won't you please let me get two breaths of fresh air without such a fuss! If I'm sleepy it's because I'm so vulgarly strong and healthy. And Kent—I'm only happy when I'm with you, truly dear."

Then he would go to her, place his trembling hands on her shoulders, stoop and kiss her brow reverently and say in a broken voice:

"God bless you, my darling; come then with me, for you are my lamp in all this darkness, and I need you so."

His periodic disappearances from his duties

PEACE AND THE VICES

were covered by a rumor of malaria, started and kept rolling by Passed Assistant Surgeon Robb, loquaciously abetted by Talty, although no word had ever passed between the two men upon the subject.

The orders to sea at the end of three years' shore duty opened a new vista of unfamiliar terrors to the young wife; but Jack was to be with him, and she herself not far away, and all would be well.

If other human faculties had but half the vitality of hope, threescore years would be but adolescence.

CHAPTER III

LIFE UNDER THE "LONE PINE"

"You like better to please than to be loved."

THE two officers joined the "Boston" at Hong Kong, leaving their families en route at Nagasaki, as a compromise point between China and Japan.

It was a mere euphemism for Talty to say he, of his own volition, had aught to do with Imogen's movements. She elected to remain temporarily with her sisters-in-law because the fitting up of their little home would include one of her sources of intense excitement—shopping. And then perhaps there was hidden in the woman a mother's instinct, denied its rightful outlet, which might have made melody out of the harsh jangle of her nature.

After a week at the hotel, through Imogen's acquaintance with the wife of an American resident, they were able to take possession of a bungalow up on the abrupt hill-side, back from the Bund.

PEACE AND THE VICES

"Ippon Matsu," surrounded by its beautiful but painfully becoddled garden, is one of the show-places in the town; in that it is built around a huge living pine-tree, whose trunk, as in Hunding's hut, is a salient part of the large entrance-hall, fitted out as a conservatory.

Under the same local guidance they came into possession of a Japanese cook, noted principally for that purely American dish—strawberry short-cake (although admittedly weak in soups). This talent—at best of ephemeral value—was always brought conspicuously forward by him when seeking American patronage, as was an equal one for tarts or scones, if sought by English or Scotch housewives. He was known only as "Cook-san." Then Miss Springtime—O Haru san—became Julie's extremely pretty little *amah*; and finally Yamaguchi, who was gardener, *momban*, messenger, *gomiman* all in one, and received six dollars a month for his Protean office.

Mammy reigned contemptuously over them all. The first day they moved in from the hotel, the two sisters, with the insouciance of southern folk, played cribbage in the summer-house, which overlooks the harbor, while Imogen, breathless and important beyond all former conceptions of that

LIFE UNDER THE "LONE PINE"

word, created chaos within the house, where otherwise peace and order would soon have ruled under the quieter manipulations of the Japanese.

Cook-san had appeared betimes, carrying over his shoulder a branch of flame-colored azalea, followed by a cringing coolie who bore a strangely small bundle of primitive kitchen-utensils, and also the provisions for the day, soon to be serenely served, the azalea for table-decoration. Julie meanwhile paddled about pendant from a blue rag in the hands of her docile *amah*. Imogen stormed about, Mammy worked in scornful silence, Cook-san performed miracles of gustatorial economy out of nothing, and was soon able to smoke many pipes in peace on the door-step, his domain in perfect order. Yamaguchi and two coolies were as leaves blown about in many winds. The sisters laughed and trusted Mammy.

In twenty-four hours such order came out of the ferment that Mrs. Fellowes could have given a dinner to exactly six people, if Julie had consented to go to sleep, thus releasing *amah* for the necessary rapid and frequent washing of their meagre table-equipment.

Even a make-shift five-o'clock-tea table and a nest of Chinese poys, stood ready in a corner of

PEACE AND THE VICES

the drawing-room for the visitors Imogen vowed were "positively champing" to call upon them.

Adele had declared for blue, after her first tour about the native town, and blue *chijimi* draped the windows, blue Osaka rugs covered the oiled floors, blue Seto ware clattered in the dining-room. The effect, if monotonous, was not wholly inartistic if the small expenditure be taken as a basis of reckoning.

Both Fellowes and Talty were men firmly opposed to their wives "following the ship," as the saying is; but the chasm between theory and practice yawned with especial width in both their cases. Kent clung almost superstitiously to a belief in the great moral effect upon him of his wife's nearness, only too willing to yield to Jack's solicitations; and the latter had no longer even a rag of dogma to swear by, as far as Imogen was concerned, and fenced listlessly for peace only, as good men stultified by mis-marriage are prone to do.

Dora and Adele were better able to consider Imogen in a humorous light, in face of her avowed resolve to join her husband, as soon as he could tell her the probable movements of the ship. It would seem from this that her absence was assured him, but he had long ago discovered the fallacy of any

LIFE UNDER THE "LONE PINE"

such view; for after a few weeks of carefully fostered uncertainty, she went anyhow.

"It seems a long way to come, just to sit and wait once more for the postman," sighed Mrs. Fellowes, standing on the veranda with eyes on the bay far below, where the ships came and went.

"Wait till our first letters come from the ship, and you'll see the difference," replied Imogen; "our news will be six days old instead of almost six weeks; and it's a real bargain to cable! Twenty cents instead of one-fifty a word, think of that! Then, as I tell Jack, I haven't a good enough memory to be left at home for three years, all my wifely constancy dependent on a poor photograph of a man whose very voice I forget in two months. No, there isn't an inch of Penelope about me, thank you! What was the name of that siren that set her—her fins—for Mr. Penelope? Now what was her name? Calliope? What say, Dell?"

"I only said it was almost right, and I do wish Yamaguchi would stop his everlasting manicuring of this garden; he's just dusted the hedge from end to end, and I'm all worn out!" groaned Adele from the top step.

"It commences with a C, anyhow. Well, what

PEACE AND THE VICES

I was going to say, when I was interrupted, was that I want to be right on hand and do my own guessing about John Talty's lady friends! Your brother is the most childlike, helpless, unobservant man I ever knew!"

"It's a wise husband who lets his wife think that," murmured Adele, whose eyes still sucked gloom from Yamaguchi's puerile efforts to be noticed.

"Now, what do you mean by that? Dora, what does Dell mean by that?" cried Imogen hysterical at once; and only by a prompt belittling of Dell's intellect could she be quieted.

Just as the disappointed gardener had in despair resorted to a fit of plainly fictitious coughing, Mammy appeared and reminded them of their morning's task, and the three young women went to work on the bedroom curtains, spread upon the dining-table.

No unattached being has ever made that voyage across the Pacific without a flirtation of greater or less import, least of all Adele Talty, to whom it was the breath of her nostrils.

"It's the greatest tonic in the world, my dear," she wickedly persisted to a disgusted Imogen, "and a positive cure for all purely nervous troubles. I

LIFE UNDER THE "LONE PINE"

like it because one always likes to do what one does well. In the first place I admit I hold good cards. Eyes that answer to the strings I pull, even to shedding very successful, if not saline, tears; a large, soft, dimpled hand, the hand men like; and a voice—but you've all felt the charm of that. Did you speak, Imogen? Oh, pardon me, I thought you said (and you are right) the world is only just beginning to see once again aught but dishonor in the warm shade of my abundant hair, so bepraised in *cinquecento* days. And then——"

"Oh, for mercy sakes, Dell! That may amuse you, but it doesn't either your sister or me," whereupon Dora swallowed her tributary giggles.

"Dat gent'mun wot was on de steamer wid us toe see yer, Miss Dell," confided Mammy familiarly from the door-way.

"It is he! Down, flutterer, down, I say!" hissed Dell, thumping her chest resoundingly. "Girls, how do I look? Will I do? Mammy, come here quick, pick me! pick me!" The girl whirled her skirts wildly about, trying to get rid of adherent scraps and threads. "Mammy, did you hear what I said to you? Come here right away and pick my dress clean!"

"I done hyar yer all right nuff, Miss Dell—I

PEACE AND THE VICES

reckon de onliest thing I didn' lose on dat yer ole steamer was meh yars—but, honey chile, all de hens I'se ever picked has been daid! I ain' never pulled de feathers off'n one on de wing. I reckon I'd bes' wait till yer light, miss!"

The laugh was on Dell, and Mammy kept up her low chuckle as she relieved her now motionless young mistress of her superfluous plumage; whom she then followed out of the room. As the girl started toward the drawing-room Mammy's hand stopped her, and the whispered words:

"Miss Dell, yer shorely ain' goin' right slam in widout'n one weentsy-teentsy dash ob rice powder on de nose? De haidless ways ob young ladies now-days! It sutney do shine, miss, like Aunt Bene's Friday night silver. Yas, um, it do!"

"Mammy Lina, you're a downright corrupt ole thing! You ought to be ashamed of yourself teaching me tricks, your youngest baby, and the flower of the family."

"Land sakes! ain' no tricks nobody kin teach you, missy! An' dat's de blessed Lord's own troof!" The black woman's great pride in the perfidy of her adored mistress glowed in her eyes as she watched the girl dancing down the hall toward her victim.

LIFE UNDER THE "LONE PINE"

"Well, Captain Fitchett, it's awfully nice to see you again. So you found us at last! I began to think you had gone on to Shanghai," was her cordially disingenuous greeting to a tall awkward man, who bowed with a jerk of his very blond head. His hand advanced only after she had withdrawn hers, seeing which he blushed painfully. His face bore the ineradicable look of a life on the sea; the deep leather color paled a little by the joy of seeing her, after many days of starving. He stared at her with wide, unblinking eyes, unconscious that he was smileless.

When he spoke, two facts were at once evident: that New England was his birthplace, and that he sprang from primitive people. Now and then Britishisms adorned his artless speech.

"Miss Talty, what you have just said isn't square. You told me not to come till to-day; and you knew I was no more likely to go over to Shanghai till I *did* see you than—well—anything you like to name. Now, didn't you?"

"Sit down, over there—that's the only masculine chair we have. I'll ring for tea."

"Please don't, I don't want what I've got to say to get mixed up with 'how many lumps' and all that! 'Tain't easy to keep you on the right course

PEACE AND THE VICES

any time, let alone foolin' with crockery. Now, didn't you know I'd come?" he persisted.

"Well, now you draw my attention to it so forcibly, Captain Fitchett, I confess I rather thought you'd come to say good-by to—Julie."

For some reason her indirectness always gave him intense pleasure, and he laughed suddenly, and then his face fell into its usual gravity and he said slowly:

"It's real holy to me, what I have to tell you before I go. Somehow it's the best part of the stuff I carry, and the deepest in the hold. A man keeps things like that down in him in a strong box; sometimes he never comes across the key to it, and it's buried just so with him, and that's the worst of all. And sometimes he loses it after he's had it; and sometimes he finds it and it fits all right—but all the same, it isn't meant for his key-ring, and he's just got to let it lay and pass on whistling and playing he don't care much one way or other, so's nobody'll feel bad. Do you make anything out of what I'm trying to say?"

"I think I understand," murmured a much-subdued Adele, all gentleness with meekly folded hands.

"I know your place in life, Miss Talty, and I

LIFE UNDER THE "LONE PINE"

know mine. It's just one of those facts (like a mountain and a valley) that was so when we came into the world. You can't change things like that—not rightly, now can you?"

"Please, please, Captain Fitchett, if you knew what a vain, shallow, horrid nature I have; why, yours is worth ten of mine—truly!" she cried earnestly.

"Yes, I know," was his calm reply; "you're not more important than the flowers are, but it wouldn't be much of a world to live in without them, all the same. I guess flowers come naturally to mean something special to sailors."

He stopped and for the first time his eyes left her face, and wandered out of the window down to the bay, where *sampans* danced about in the sharp afternoon breeze that swept up from the China Sea.

Adele was utterly at a loss with this man in his present mood, with whom (among others less primitive) she had amused herself on the steamer coming over.

She sat ill at ease, somewhat awed, and humiliated by her undesired success.

"You asked me once about my life, but I couldn't tell you with all those others round, always laugh-

ing. I've come to tell you to-day, and then I'm going away. I've lived twenty years in Shanghai, off and on. I take political prisoners, that come round by Suez, up to the Russian penal colony at Saghalien. Then we bring down coal to Port Arthur. My passengers are mostly prisoners. A man sees cruel things and he can't do much about it, but look away. But I'm the skipper and I do what I can. It's a hard life. Yes, that's the way I learned to speak Russian, and know such a lot of criminal yarns. You always used to wonder. There's a heap of underground business going on out here, that ain't got into the papers yet. It'll be in books by and by. Oh, yes, I'm in it up to the eyes, but so long as I'm in their employ, I'm not talking much. They pay me all right—those Russian fellows—and they let me be. There's money in it, direct and indirect the *cumshaw* system rules in China, no use fighting it. You give and you take. And I want it for my little girl Manthy. Oh, I knew I'd surprise you! She was born twenty years ago, and I never laid eyes on her till this trip home—first one in all that time. I left her with mother, I wanted she should be brought up *pukka*. She's neat and she's good, and goes to church, and I dress her nice," he paused, watching

LIFE UNDER THE "LONE PINE"

for the effect pathetically, and Dell did not disappoint him. "Takes four and a half yards to make those loose bodices women wear now, doesn't it? I thought I had about the size of it. Well, I got her six of 'em, all silk. I just let her choose, and she'd laugh, and blush, and the clerks thought we were a young couple. You see I took her down to Boston to give her a good time. I fixed her out real nice. I didn't stint any money on Manthy, once I got back to her. I'd been saving a long time, and I guess I can save again. I don't know which I like the best: saving, or blowing it all in at once. Two ancestors scrapping in me, you think? Well, I guess that's just it! Hadn't thought of that. Miss Talty"—he hesitated, feeling his own pulse, not hers, before going on: "I'd like to tell you about the way Manthy and I met. I never told anyone, even mother. I felt down sick from excitement when I got home, and I saw mother first (looking not a day older, by ginger!) and I told her to send my baby in to me, and leave us alone. And she came in and I couldn't speak, and I had to sit down sudden, I felt so queer. Somehow I'd got it into my head she'd be a little bit of a girl, you see, although mother'd sent me one or two pictures of her. There she stood in the

PEACE AND THE VICES

door-way tall, like me, and so clean and pretty, and I liked the way she did her hair. And I knew in a second by her eyes, as a man always knows, that she was good. That's what I liked best of all. And there we were, both of us plum scared to death! But she was a grown-up woman, and I was sort of surprised at mother leaving her alone with me—after Shanghai. I didn't think I had any right to touch a big girl like that—after—well, after the way men live out here. Oh, I was all adrift, and in a fog, and couldn't get the sun. I vow I'd a-been there yet if it hadn't been for Manthy! She—Miss Talty—she waited and she waited, staring, and then she must have felt sorry for me, for she ran to me and she put her arms around my neck and she whispered, shy-like, just one word: 'Papa!' and I don't remember the rest very well—something burst inside of me," he ended simply.

Dell's eyes were full and she caught her breath.

"I'm glad I told you—I was afraid I wouldn't be. I couldn't bring myself to talking with mother. Mother she's a good woman, and strong, and did well by Manthy; but my girl's mother was a Roman Catholic, and mother'll never get over it as long's there's life in her. Say, do you know

LIFE UNDER THE "LONE PINE"

Vermont? Ever lived there? Well, I married her just the same. And the candle of her life was blown out just as the baby's was lit. Mother said it was a judgment. I wouldn't even look at the baby, never laid eyes on her! And there wasn't anything to keep me, but I had my trade, and I got this offer out here from the Russians, and I came. Mother's been good to Manthy and raised her nice, but she's a Presbyterian all right!" a smile softened his face for an instant. "Every other year I've got to go home now, Manthy says, or she'll get married to punish me. I believe I'd kill a man if he took her away from me now! Think not? Well, perhaps; I can't have her out here, you see. A little white thing like that in Shanghai, and I away most of the time? No, I can't have her, that's settled. She has ways like you, Miss Talty; sort of saucy, and teasing and exciting somehow; and she says more than she means—or lots less—you never know. But you like it all the same. There's something sort of naughty about it, and yet a man knows down under, it really isn't. I don't seem to be able to get hold of what I do mean."

"And Manthy's mother, tell me about her?" asked Dell, thinking only to please the man.

PEACE AND THE VICES

To her amazement he answered shortly:

"That's best left alone, I think."

"I did not mean—I only—I beg your pardon, Captain Fitchett," poor Dell stopped, confused for one of the few times in her life.

"That's all right, Miss Talty. I want you should know everything you do is all right always. But all that hurt so long, shut up alone with it, that I can't touch it even for you; any more than I'd let anyone speak of you to me. I guess I'm saving in my affections same's my pocket, till it comes to spending it on the two or three people I've ever loved in all my life, then I'm game to the last copper cash, and don't you forget it! And now I must be going. I sail at six." He arose, walked to the window, and with his back turned, presently said:

"There's something, Miss Talty, that's been teasing and teasing me for a week, I wonder if you'd let me use a—word once before I go? I know I'd feel quiet if you'd let me say it."

"Oh, I'm so sorry about—everything! Yes, yes, I trust you absolutely—Manthy's father? Ah, how could I do otherwise?"

He crossed the room, and his great brown hands swallowed her little white ones, and he said with a quiet gentleness:

LIFE UNDER THE "LONE PINE"

"It's all here—the love—but there's no use. It's going to be a great comfort to me, just the same, if you'd let me write to you about Manthy. Good-by, dear—dear!" he repeated lingeringly, and then he was gone.

"Mammy, O Mammy! come here to me, this minute, I want you!" wailed Dell in the hall, and when the old woman came breathless, the girl threw herself into the black arms that had framed all her moods since she was born. And Mammy went back to baby talk, rocking the girl back and forth on her knee.

"Dere, dere! Mammy'll take a sharp stick ter dose ole silly teahs—cl'ar out'n dis, spilin' de purty eyes! Ole debbil ob a man, raisin' a row jes co'se she kyarn't marry him—kyarn't marry all ob um!"

"Mammy, he didn't ask me. It isn't that. It's because——"

The old nurse heard only the first phrase, and holding Dell off from her by the shoulders, she sternly asked:

"He didn' done arsk yer? Wot yer mean, Miss Dell? Wot fer yer wase'n de whole breathin' arfternoon on him, 'less he was a co'tin' yer? Wot fer yer bus' right out weepin' and wailin' like dis?"

"He's so—so good—and this time it wasn't any fun at all!"

PEACE AND THE VICES

“Yer ain’ got no call ter cry ’cause a man’s good —’ceptin’ an ’scusin’ de rareness of it! I ’clar, I’s e right ’shamed ’bout dis, I sutney are, Miss Dell! Arfter yo’ ma an’ I raised yer so——”

“Please don’t scold, he would have asked me if I had encouraged him, truly he would. And you’d never understand, dear old Mammy, if I talked a year.”

“Oh, he would? Well, I reckon we-all ’ll git on s’prisingly well widout’n him! Nuthin’ but a po’ white trash Yankee man, anyhow, an’ Miss Im’gen she ’grees wid me!”

The negress relaxed her grasp on Dell, and drew her again toward her, emitting sundry sounds of gradual pacification, and soon peace was once more established between the two.

CHAPTER IV

TWO CABLEGRAMS FROM HONG KONG

“ Fate steals along with silent tread.”

“ **O**—OH, Dell!” cried Dora one afternoon, prolonging the vowel in southern fashion: “Come here, I’ve got something to tell you.”

Mrs. Fellowes had just come in from her search for salt-cellars, which furnished her the daily motive for long strolls about the native town, as its cognates have generations of otherwise sane Anglo-Saxons, when the Oriental seed of barter once begins to germinate within them.

“Find any *saka-dzuki-dai*?” asked Adele, advancing down the hall, her finger in a book.

“Yes, three perfect beauties! Darlingest old hideous things you ever laid eyes on, outside of a nightmare. I’ll show you—but that’s not what I want to tell you. Whom do you suppose I met at old Sato’s? Now, guess! I’ll give you three guesses—I’ll give you thirty-three! Walked in as cool as ever, twice as handsome, and—I’ll not tell

PEACE AND THE VICES

you another thing if you don't get a little excited about it." Dell spurned all surmises, and her book tucked under her arm, began to untie the queer little packages pendant from bits of coarse split straw-rope.

When Dora could no longer stand the irritating silence, she exclaimed:

"Doctor Robb!" and openly revelled in her sister's uncontrollable surprise and embarrassment.

"You don't mean Passed Assistant Surgeon Stoneleigh Robb, United States Navy?" the girl demanded hysterically.

Dora walked away toward her room, bent on revenge.

"When's he coming?" cried Dell, starting after her, full tilt, before she could lock her door. But it was too good a chance shot to lose, and over her shoulder Dora tossed:

"Coming? I didn't say he was coming. He's going—on the O. and O. steamer at five this afternoon, as soon as they coal."

"Indeed! Any other news?"

Dell strove after vocal indifference, and overdid it.

"Oh, then you wouldn't mind a little mundane chatter after all? I wouldn't intrude for worlds!"

TWO CABLEGRAMS FROM HONG KONG

baited Dora, feeling for hat-spears before the glass.

"Dora!" pleaded the one.

"Dell!" teased the other.

"Well, I want to talk too badly to waste any more time. He's ordered to the 'Boston'! Doctor Steinberg's eyes have given out—isn't that perfectly lovely?"

"He probably would not agree with you," carped Dell, at odds with life in general.

"Which he? what he? You've got me all jumbled up—but you know what I mean perfectly well, Dell, you know you do. Anyhow, Doctor Robb got his orders exactly two weeks after we left, he said."

"Well, but—what did he say about things generally? About the family? About—good heavens, did you two just sit and jabber about these silly old salt-cellars the whole afternoon?" cried Dell with asperity, sitting on the edge of the bed, and twitching once more at Dora's purchases.

"Never once mentioned salt-cellars—and it wasn't we two, it was we—three!" Dora wanted her sister to marry Doctor Robb, and her ways were feminine.

"Three! That stands always for discord—

PEACE AND THE VICES

old Sato is a chatter-box." Dell arose and started for the door, so her back was turned when Dora added:

"I forgot to say that he had a stunning creature with him from the steamer; ashore together for the day, sight-seeing and getting tortoise-shell and photographs. He's been out before and knows the ropes, you see. He introduced us, but Sato came in with a perfectly heavenly salad-bowl (old Imari, Dell, red and green!), and we all screamed together, and I lost the name. Anyhow she had gorgeous grayish-blue eyes, with golden lashes—sweetest effect you ever saw——"

"Doesn't sound very attractive," said she of the heavy brows, standing before a *kakemono* beside the door, which she knew every line of already, to the point of nausea.

"And such hair! And she wore one of those new covert-cloth jackets with bands of—" but the door closed with a bang that set all the *kakemonos* shivering sensitively against the walls. Reopening her door to a crack, Dora laughingly called after the retreating figure:

"O Dell! please tell Mammy Doctor Robb asked about her, and sent his love."

Miss Talty's chagrin would have appreciably

TWO CABLEGRAMS FROM HONG KONG

diminished had she known that Doctor Robb's conduct in Nagasaki had been very carefully considered beforehand by that sagacious young man; both as to what he had done and left undone, and he had gone on his way rejoicing that for once the Fates had graciously lent their aid. Her real indifference might be cured by his assumed indifference.

Mammy's frank delight at the doctor's message was but one more item in his nice calculation of chances. She had her intensely strong likes and dislikes among Miss Adele's many suitors. More than once in the girl's brief social life in Richmond the old woman had taken a man's card at the door, and slipped it under the great dusty pile in the punch-bowl on the hall-table; and said not a word when her young mistress returned and demanded tidings.

The young naval surgeon had won, at their first meeting, all of Mammy's intuitive approval and active collusion, although no word had ever passed between them anent an occult end. The old servant's general pride in Miss Talty's witcheries was for once in abeyance before this one man's purpose.

About a week after the transit of Apollo, Miss Talty entered the summer-house one hot afternoon

PEACE AND THE VICES

to find O Haru standing, her face hidden in one of her long sleeves, from which loud and prolonged snuffles announced native feminine grief. Yamaguchi, devoured by curiosity, clipped nearby an inoffensive young cedar into the shape of a deformed stork, pretending absorption in his fell work; his attention riveted on Mammy, who was on her knees before the *amah*, sewing with wide sweeps of her vigorous right arm.

"Why, Haru, what's the matter?" asked Dell.

"*Wa-kari-ma-sen!*" whined the *amah*, who indeed comprehended nothing of this assault.

"Mammy, what on earth are you doing?" demanded Miss Talty, catching up Julie and putting her on the little centre-table, where she executed a delighted *pas seul*, hanging to her aunt's forefingers.

"I ain' goin' ter stan' it not another minute, Miss Dell! Traipsin' roun' wid her skirts all open down de front! Dis heah klomono's goin' ter be sewed right clean on up toe de torp—'scusin' a plocket fo' de silly haid ter come froo. De ole ones puttin' shoe black on dere teefs, makin' b'lieve like dey done finish wid de vanities ob dis heah worl'—oh, I'se been readin' in de books all 'bout it! an' all de endurin' time dey's splayin' dere

TWO CABLEGRAMS FROM HONG KONG

laigs ebry step, an' no stockings on, Miss Dell! 'Taint decent, an' I tole yo' ma long time 'go, I'd——"

"Mammy, let Haru go, and go into the house; I'll explain things there later on," said Dell, smothering her glee on Julie's shoulder. The negress obeyed, but for two days thereafter she went about sunk into a fathomless sullen silence that they all knew, and which no one ever disturbed. A mood when the primitive savagery of the creature for a time held complete sway over her passionate nature. After a time the thin cobweb of civilization was once more spun back and forth, screening the old primal instincts, and she cringed before the two sisters, wordlessly begging for love and pardon.

The day that speech returned to Mammy, she knocked at Miss Talty's door, and entering, drew the bolt with one of her swift, noiseless gestures. Then she advanced and handed Dell a pink paper, which she read and reread with growing concern.

It was from Hong Kong, addressed to "Carolina," and read: "K. needs D.," signed Talty.

It had been decided that Mammy, who could read and write and upon whose tact and judgment they had all their lives relied, was to remain in

PEACE AND THE VICES

Nagasaki with little Julie, whithersoever all the others might scatter in pursuit of pleasure, or in obedience to official orders; and to her all cablegrams were to be sent, at Jack's insistence. She knew the whole tragedy of Dora's married life and was the only creature allowed to see Kent when he was "not himself." Imogen was still in entire ignorance of the truth, and regarded Kent Fellowes with about an equally divided feeling of admiration and fear—fear of his great reserve, dignity, and that something sad and elusive about him which she had always felt. Adele still kept up the fiction of knowing nothing of the shadow overhanging her sister's life; so it will be seen that her brother's brief message carried in its train many perplexities.

"I don' reckon we'd bes' leave dis tablegram roun' kyarless," Mammy said dryly, as she tore the paper into the smallest bits.

Adele sat silent before her little *chijimi* draped dressing-table, brushing her great cape of hair unconsciously again and again in one spot.

"Any ray ob light pokin' he'self froo a chink in yo' hay-lof' yet, missy?"

"Not a ray, Mammy."

"Seems like pore Miss Im'gen done get mo'

TWO CABLEGRAMS FROM HONG KONG

an' mo' spur'flus like. She ain' bein' begged fo' de pleasure ob her comp'ny in dis heah message fum Mars' Jack, is she, Miss Dell?"

"No, Mammy."

"Mighty like Mars' Jack ter plump a thing down like dat an' stroll off easy-like, an' leave de projectin' ter we-all, ain' it, Miss Dell?"

"Mighty like, and I tell you right now, Mammy, I'm never, never going to marry!" and the girl suddenly tossed back her hair and began to arrange it. Mammy gave her low musical chuckle as she stood handing the tortoise-shell hair-pins, one at a time.

"Yo' ma, she say de same thing 'bout—lemme see—well, 'bout fo'-five weeks prev'us to de weddin' ceromonies! Yas'm, she did! I done hyar Ole Aunt Bene tell all 'bout it, at leas' a thousan' times. Do yer know, Miss Dell, I'se been stud'n on dis gettin' an' givin' in mar'age, a powerful lot, I has; an' sometimes I think 'tain't a real nat-chul dispoosition! No'm, 'tain't. De man he sutney do kick like a mule 'gains' it—an' de gyrl she strain herself pullin' away—but, Gawd! when de fever do begin ter take hole! Den she kyarn't sew fars' nuff gettin' ready, an' he?—well, he ain' doin' any more dem kickin' shines, he ain'; 'ceptin'

PEACE AND THE VICES

'gainst de long, long time she do take ter git ready, an' drivin' him jes' stark, starin', plum crazy!"

"You can go on chattering for a week, Mammy Lina, but we've both got to come back to Mister Jack's cable, just the same; and what to do? What to say? What not to say?"

"Oh! it's all easy nuff 'bout Miss Dora. I done send dat deah old Yamagoosy man down erready, Miss Dell, toe arsk 'bout de steamer, an' dere's one to-morrow; dat's all right, dat's nuffin. But de real pebble in de shoe is Miss Im'gen! I reckon she'll give Mars' Jack a s'prise party, an' go on over ter Hong Kong widout'n a invitation, don't you, missy?"

Adele had completely disappeared under a curtain of hair suddenly let down over her face, in that critical moment of nice quantitative judgment which decides the success of a pompadour, and she made no response.

"Fo' de pars' ten days, de cap'n's"—Mammy had always called Kent that—"han'writin' show jes' as plain dat de fight was a comin'! Miss Dora she notice it mighty quick; I see her settin' all shrinked up intoe herself—you know de way de pore chile act when it comes? Jes' like a flower look in de mo'nin' when Mars' Jack Frost been

TWO CABLEGRAMS FROM HONG KONG

payin' his compliments de night befo'. When de cap'n he's all right, he done write big an' proud-like, but when de debbil in him begin rub his eyes an' wake up, he write all small an' scrouged-up, like he 'shamed ob hisself."

"Yes, Mammy, I know," sighed Adele drearily.

After breakfast Mammy told Mrs. Fellowes the news, berating herself soundly for losing the paper. But from Lieutenant Talty's summons the sting had been taken by the sagacious old woman. Even then the young wife went restlessly about, her sweet face pinched with the old dread. She told her sister and Imogen that Kent was not particularly well, and she thought best to join him for a few weeks in Hong Kong.

Imogen's voluble rage and jealousy at not being similarly solicited by her husband, when Kent had obviously begged his wife to join him—although for some reason they would not show her the telegram—was for once welcome, and hid the general embarrassment.

"Well, Lieutenant John Calhoun Talty, appointed from Richmond, Virginia, I'll see you later! *Amah*, you go catchee my number one trunk-box, chop-chop; have got kitchen-side," commanded Imogen in her pidgin English, which was

PEACE AND THE VICES

a wild, rootless, sporadic growth of her own, almost valueless as a means to an end.

"Yes, sir or madam, as the case mebbe," said Haru proudly from the height of her newly acquired phrase-book knowledge; and the laugh which followed the tiny woman's exit had the tonic effect it generally has upon a harassed household.

The next afternoon Dora and Imogen sailed away on the great white Canadian Pacific steamer "Empress of India," and one hour later a cable-message, addressed directly to his wife, came from Lieutenant Fellowes. Adele opened it: "'Boston' sails to-day for docking, Nagasaki," and she and Mammy sat and stared blankly into each other's eyes. Finally the former said slowly to herself:

"My brother sent that first message without Kent's knowledge, trusting to Dora's tact. Kent does not know Dora has started, as she said she would not wire him until she reached Shanghai, and could be more sure of the day and hour of arrival in Hong Kong, to save him the strain of longer waiting, and Imogen was silent because she was furious. Mammy," Dell arose excitedly, "if we can get word to them in Shanghai and they can catch a return steamer at once, as the liners are

TWO CABLEGRAMS FROM HONG KONG

so much faster than any man-of-war, we can get them back in time. Get my hat and parasol, quick, quick!"

Mammy leaned over the gate and watched the slim white figure running down to the Settlement.

"If de cap'n came, and find Miss Dora done gone away, jes' now when he need' her so! I doan like de looks ob it, nohow!" and she got her sewing and sat on the top step of the veranda and waited. A prophetic thrill of impending disaster ran through her a half hour later when she saw her young mistress dragging herself slowly up the lane, ill-tidings written large upon the relaxed, weary face and figure. Mammy raised her head, breathing deeply through her flattened nostrils, her eyes fixed on the swaying tree-tops; and Adele found her so, as she approached and stood wondering; and then frightened she shook her violently by the arm, and the negress turned slowly and looked at her with dazed eyes.

"Yer needn' tole me, Miss Dell; dere ain' no steamer, an' de 'Boston' 'll be hyar befo' dey can get away fum dat deah Shanghai-place. An' all de res' is jes' damn!"

"Mammy, I forbid your using that word! I've told you twenty times I will not allow it. I'm

PEACE AND THE VICES

ashamed of you!" and Miss Talty walked past her into the house. The old woman sat and grumbled to herself, breaking out now and then viciously with the forbidden word; and then sinking back into the old formless mumbling.

However, the emergency of the hour soon brought them together again for counsel and sympathy. The despatch to Shanghai was already on its way, there was now absolutely nothing to do but wait.

After the fourth day, mistress and maid took turns speeding down to the Bund, every time a salute was fired, in search of the white cruiser flying from its staff the Stars and Stripes. Adele had asked at the American consulate if the "Boston" had been in Nagasaki within a year, and the negative answer told her that the expected man-of-war would salute the Japanese flag upon entering the port. For that signal she waited in growing trepidation. The consul had already been informed of the coming of the American war-ship, as he had to arrange with the Japanese authorities the question of docking privileges. From him Adele learned that the "Boston" was coming direct across from Hong Kong, and from that moment she renounced all hope of Dora's return in time. But

TWO CABLEGRAMS FROM HONG KONG

with all their watchfulness the ship slid to her anchorage late one afternoon, unobserved, unannounced, no salute being fired after sunset in any port; and Imogen not there to tell them of the simple fact.

An officer of the "Boston" had to go ashore at once after anchoring, on business for the captain at the consulate relative to the docking, and the first lieutenant, knowing Mrs. Fellowes had settled herself in Nagasaki, sent Fellowes. He started at once in the boat with the mail orderly. Just as he was stepping into the steam-launch, Talty ran down the ladder and said in a low tone to his brother-in-law:

"Kent, I wish you'd wait for me. I'll be free to go in fifteen minutes. I—er—have not told you—it was to be a sort of surprise between Dora and me—but there's just a chance she may have started for Hong Kong."

"The deuce, you say!" cried Fellowes, his face turning white with anger.

"Come back, old fellow, and wait for me. We'll hunt them up together," begged Jack.

"Shove off!" ordered Fellowes savagely.

"It's only the merest chance!" called Talty after the boat; cursing inwardly his present unsuccessful

PEACE AND THE VICES

incarnation as he ascended the gangway with slow steps.

Lieutenant Fellowes went directly to the consulate, where he only saw a subordinate, and him very briefly. He opened a telegram from Tokio and wrote out a reply to it, as instructed, in the captain's name, a copy of which was enclosed in the commander's packet, sealed, and, with the great bag of home mail for the ship, intrusted to the mail orderly.

Kent could not bring himself to ask about his wife's movements, and left the consulate still in ignorance; the nervous strain growing momentarily upon him, that had commenced in the languorous tropical atmosphere of Hong Kong. His mid-watch thoughts had ever clung through all this separation to the dear picture of Dora waiting for him in some high-perched place, all trees and flowers, and little Julie beside her dancing and laughing and calling out to him—and they were always in white—the mother and child alike.

With one coolie in front and two *atoshi* behind, his jinrikisha flew along the Oura road, over the bridge, past the back of the hotel, from the open windows and green swinging half-door of which came a strong odor which started the moisture

TWO CABLEGRAMS FROM HONG KONG

upon the brow of the American officer, already half ill from long battling with desire, to which he had not yet yielded.

Something outside of himself could only at this point rescue him from the fast mounting obsession in possession of him, body and soul. Surely it lay alone in Dora's sweet shy eyes, in the healing touch of her cool soft hand, in his baby's little gurgle of delighted recognition.

Fellowes reached the gate of "Ippon Matsu," where his three coolies gladly dumped him, and stood panting out their exaggerated fatigue. He tossed upon the seat the usual overpayment of a sailor's first day ashore, opened the gate of the compound and entered.

It was all strange to him, the stiff lawn and the redundantly cared for hedges and shrubs, the pebbled paths, the great gnarled pine coming through the roof, unhomelike in its weirdness—and silence everywhere. It was far removed from what he was longing for, in every strung-up fibre of his tortured being.

Cook-san came running from his quarters in response to the peal of the bell, and his "No have got" was Kent's home-greeting.

Fellowes stalked into the bungalow to the con-

PEACE AND THE VICES

sternation of the hovering Japanese, who, after one frightened glance, turned and disappeared.

Kent wandered forlornly from room to room until he came to his wife's—unmistakably hers from a score of dear, sacred signs. He stood beside her dressing-table, looking down and gently fingering those dainty little addenda of the feminine toilet, familiar to him and yet forever enigma to his masculine understanding. Then suddenly he knew the truth.

Beside his framed photograph in uniform was the tiny silver vase of flowers she always kept there; and the clematis blossoms were faded, shrivelled at the edges, a few petals fallen—she was gone! He broke away with a loud cry of "Dora!" and threw himself down beside the bed on his knees, buried his face in the pillows, his hands outstretched and clinched over his head. The door softly opened, Mammy's black eyes looked in, saw it all, and gently withdrew.

Kent presently dragged himself slowly to his feet, stood looking about as if bewildered, and then left the room, closing the door behind him. In the dining-room he poured out a glass of ice-water to moisten a mouth and throat parched almost to the point of suffocation; after one swallow

TWO CABLEGRAMS FROM HONG KONG

he put down the glass hastily, with a shiver of disgust. The man was in an agony only known to the haunted of the earth. His senses were in such a state of susceptibility that the mere coldness of the glass of ice-water sent a sharp pain through his arm; the odor of the morning coffee lingered in the room sickeningly discernible to his irritated sense of smell; he winced at the light peering through the *sudare* overhanging the open windows; the ticking of his watch affected him as would the rapid thud of a great piece of machinery. Such was his sensorial condition that it seemed as if he "should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence." To bring back the usual "well-wadded stupidity" of ordinary healthful being was what he longed for, not the means itself; the effect of drink is the poisoned fang. The taste of it was always hateful to Fellowes, as to many another who dragged much heavier chains.

He took his hat and went to the conservatory-like entrance-hall, in which the great trunk of "Ip-pon Matsu" formed the central object. The floor was the pebbled earth, the walls and roof were glass, and everywhere were ferns, and palms, bamboos, camellias, huge gardenias, and vines running riot.

PEACE AND THE VICES

Kent paced rapidly back and forth, and then sank into a wicker chair, his head fell back, his eyes closed, his hat dropped from his trembling hand. His fine face was congested, distorted as if seen in a convex mirror.

Mammy found him there when with heavy tread and loud exclamations of surprise she approached for the second time.

"How d'y do, Cap'n? It's mighty nice ter see you, sah, deed'n it sutney is. Cook-san, he come a flyin' an' cry out: '*Okii dannasan* have got!' (De fool way dey talk out hyar!) I was sound 'sleep, sah. Miss Dell an' little missy dey gone down toe de flower-market. Dey'll be hyar to-rectly." She picked up his hat and stood before him with a feeling of helplessness novel to her. He winced at her loud cheerful voice, but his rigid lips fell into the pitiful lines of a forced smile, and he opened his eyes and looked up at her smiling black face, and held out his hand.

The instant she touched his burning palm, and looked into his heavy bloodshot eyes, she knew it was too late—nothing could undo the influence of that first fatal ten minutes in the empty house. But she would not yield without a fight. She ran to the kitchen and ordered a cup of black

TWO CABLEGRAMS FROM HONG KONG

coffee at once, bringing back with her when she returned a small soft pillow, which, while she chattered on, she slipped quietly under his head. His face twitched at the woman's gentle touch, and suddenly he again seized her hand and wrung it in silence.

"Yas, Cap'n, Mammy know all 'bout it. I understand, chile—and I boun' ter help yer all I can, sah! It's a monstrous shame ter have things turn out dis way! It is fo' shore! We jes' been racin' and rarin' up an' down dat ole hill out yonder fo' days an' days watchin' fo' you, sah, an' Mars' Jack. Deed an' we has. I don't see how come we-all missed de salute nohow! Cap'n, jes' think ob pore Miss Dora! She jes' niver will get over dis mistake we-all made. Yer see, sah, she was dat crazy toe see yer, we-all 'sided she bes' go right on over ter Hong Kong—an' she no mo'n lef' on de steamer dan 'long cum yo' own tablegram, sah!"

"Mammy, tell me the truth, when will Mrs. Fellowes return?" he asked hoarsely.

"Why, she's comin' right quick. She's on de way now, yas, sah. De steamer comin' in any minute now, an' den won't der be a grand confustercation in dis heah funny ole bangalow? Dat's

PEACE AND THE VICES

what Miss Dell she call it, I dunno what fur, sah," lied the negress grandly, as she always did when she considered the truth inexpedient; seeing no evil whatever in a lie told for love's sake, but he knew in his heart she was misleading him, knew it absolutely.

He started up suddenly and reached for his hat, saying:

"I'm going for a long tramp, Mammy. I think it will do me good. Hot? Is it? I don't seem to feel it after Hong Kong." Then her great resonant voice broke out excitedly:

"Aw, Cap'n, not befo' little Miss Julie see her papa? Not befo'—why, Cap'n, yer jes' oughter hyar dat chile say 'my ba-ba!' Has Miss Dora tole yer 'bout dat? Keepin' it fo' a s'prise, I reckon. I think dere's dey voices now, comin' up de lane! Yas, sah, dey shorely is."

"I want to go off alone and take a long walk," he repeated obstinately.

Then the coffee came, and to please her he tried to drink it, but again he turned from it with uncontrollable repulsion.

"Tell Miss Dell I'll be back for dinner. I don't suppose you have it till eight. In summer nobody does." He walked toward the door.

TWO CABLEGRAMS FROM HONG KONG

Mammy had been thinking deeply, and she started violently as she saw him slipping from her grasp. With a gesture of desperation, she exclaimed:

"Befo' yer go, Cap'n, jes' step inside, sah. No, I'll bring it out hyar. Jes' wait one little teensy minute, Cap'n, will yer, jes' ter please ole Mammy? Thank yer, sah!" She went into the house, still talking all the time, with a soft coaxing note in her voice. She returned carrying a lacquer tray, on which stood a bottle of Scotch whiskey, a siphon, and a tumbler full of ice.

Fellowes looked at her in amazement, and then he understood the old servant's attempt to keep him at home at all costs.

The blood ran into the man's face, and he stood a moment in silence with bowed head, and then said, gently:

"No, Mammy, none of that. I understand you. Do not fear. Do you hear me? I'm coming back to dinner," and he went down the steps, across the lawn, and out of the gate.

The negress stood staring after him, tears running down her face, still holding the tray by which she had sought to buy his presence, until the others came to help her.

PEACE AND THE VICES

“De cap’n done gone. Fo’ Gawd, Miss Dora,
I done my bes’ ter keep ’um!”

She sat down on the steps, the tray beside her,
and rocked herself back and forth in misery; and
Dell found her there a half hour later.

CHAPTER V

FELLOWES IS MISSING

“ O beautiful awful Summer day,
What hast thou given, what taken away ! ”

AFTER the long-delayed dinner—to which Kent did not return—Jack left the house on one of those pitiful subterranean hunts for a lost soul, but it was three days before Kent was found.

During that time Dora had returned, alone. Imogen, in one of her febrile climaxes, refused to leave Shanghai until requested to do so by a shamefully defaulting husband.

“Ippon Matsu” sheltered a silent and disintegrated household. Dora, after the first shock on learning the truth from her brother, who met her on her arrival, had no intercourse with anyone save Mammy. She stayed in her own room with locked door, pacing back and forth all through the day, and lying listening all through the long terrible nights for the wandering step that did not come.

PEACE AND THE VICES

Each time the negress knocked at her door, Dora flew and opened it, whispering: "Has he come? have they found him?" Her face was very old, and white, and thin; and the look in her young eyes a thing to turn away from, shuddering.

Captain Pehoe, of the "Boston," was one of those men who glory in their own limitations. His virtues were best told in negatives.

He was a misplaced monk, with a gift for propagandism not properly appreciated by his social environment.

Pleasure, from music to golf; beauty, from a violet to a sunset; all life's dear excess, was temperamentally offensive to him, albeit he used other captions than these. He was not only a bachelor, but proud of it. A good officer, a man of flawless rectitude, his ships were always the cleanest in the Navy—and always the most unhappy.

Fellowes' absence was reported by the executive officer at quarters next morning, and a half hour later Talty was called to the captain's cabin, and in response to a question, replied:

"I do not know where Lieutenant Fellowes is, sir."

"You went ashore together? Or you saw him after leaving the ship anyhow?"

FELLOWES IS MISSING

"Neither, sir."

"Has a search been made for him, Mr. Talty?"

"Yes, sir."

"That will do, Mr. Talty. Orderly, tell the doctor I'd like to see him." And a few moments later:

"Doctor, did you notice anything unusual in Lieutenant Fellowes when you last saw him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ah-h, been drinking?"

There was no answer.

"Doctor Robb, I ask you if in your opinion Lieutenant Fellowes had been drinking."

"No, sir, not one drop."

"What was there unusual, then?"

"I noticed the extreme tension and irritability of the man's whole nervous system, sir."

"Due to what?"

"Well, Captain, it's a long story. The objective symptoms as shown at that time, do not necessarily give us the whole etiology of the case, sir," and the doctor smiled kindly upon a world full of faults.

"I can understand English about as well as the average man, Doctor Robb, and I insist on your putting into one word, or phrase, what you are

PEACE AND THE VICES

driving at." Pehoe's voice was in its most rasping key.

"Very well, sir! In one word: Lieutenant Fellowes' condition was largely due to the fact that he was *not* drinking!"

"That will do! Orderly, tell Mr. Sault to be ready to go ashore in the one o'clock boat."

At the twelve o'clock breakfast Doctor Robb's place was vacant. He had shifted from uniform into citizen's dress at once after leaving the cabin, hailed a *sampan* and gone on twenty-four hours' leave. As he went up the hotel steps, a Japanese dressed in European clothes advanced toward him from the veranda, where it was obvious he had been waiting, and together they descended the steps and walked slowly down the Bund, in absorbed conversation; ending with the passing of money from the white hand to the yellow.

Many previous visits to Nagasaki made the finding of "Ippon Matsu" the matter of a few minutes, and Robb rang at the closed and well-barred door, shutting its teeth down over its own heart-breaking secret.

Mammy opened it. He put his finger to his lips, and beckoned her outside.

"Get yourself ready for a long ride—we may

FELLOWES IS MISSING

be out half the night. And, Mammy, I wish you'd take off that turban of yours, I don't want people staring at us."

"Yas, sah. Has—has yer found him, sah?"

"No questions, please, Mammy; trust me, and come quickly. I'll wait outside the gate."

"Yas, sah, torectly!" and she slipped inside, one vast glow of joy from head to foot, the instinct of trail-following tingling in her veins.

Doctor Robb had as good a head as hand, when it came to human operations; and he was absolutely sure of the negress' intelligence and discretion.

Five minutes passed and then she rejoined him as silently as a shadow, and he smiled his satisfaction when he saw the long rain-coat that enveloped her, the head-dress replaced by a large hat over which a heavy veil served to further obliterate all individuality.

"Yas, sah?" was all she said, the rising inflection suggestive of immediate further action.

"O—o—oh, Mammy!" called Dell's voice softly from the gate, as the two turned the first corner of the narrow road leading abruptly up the hill. Doctor Robb felt the blood rush to his face—it had been an eternity since he had heard that voice.

PEACE AND THE VICES

His heart cried out within him to go back and touch the only hand in the world that brought him healing; to turn back, at least, to see her for whom he hungered. But he went sturdily on, and Mammy, who had the head of a great social schemer, chuckled and murmured, as if to herself:

"I reckon it's somebody else 'sides yer ole Mammy yer callin' arfter, in dat deah sort er coaxin' voice!"

The doctor looked sharply at the old woman, but even his keen eyes could not penetrate that expunging veil.

Farther on they took jinrikishas with three coolies to each, and with the hoods raised to prevent possible recognition, they started off toward the road to Mogi.

The six natives toiled slowly up the long hill, rested at the top, drinking tea between many tiny pipes of tobacco, and then dashed down the lengthy incline to the sea. Far away from humanity now, save for a heavily laden peasant now and then, upon whom the jinrikisha men tried their impudent urban wit, as they swept by, inciting each other by piercing cries to greater speed. Long after the caravan had passed the peasants stood and stared

FELLOWES IS MISSING

after it, and bethought themselves of very witty answers when it was too late.

The smell of the beach came strongly to their nostrils, long before their ears caught the soft sibilant murmur of the sea "raking the sea-worn pebbles up and down."

At the bottom of the hill they passed through the little fishing village, and on to the two foreigners' tea-houses nearer the beach, under wonderful old twisted pines, which as usual gave a tragic note to an otherwise commonplace scene.

Upon their arrival before the first *chaya*, the doctor helped Mammy to alight, sure of the stiffness that rendered her a little helpless for a few moments. Walking her up and down briskly, he asked her to raise her veil, as if to remove all obstacles between his intelligence and her quick intuition. It was a supreme test of her character to which he was subjecting her, and that she was not going to fail him he felt at her first words:

"I'se took de greates' fancy ter dem bamboo-trees, Mars' Doctor, back yonder!"

"Have you, Mammy; how's that? I prefer these pines."

"I dunno how 'tis, sah; but seems like dey's jes' a passel er young folks tossin' dey little haids 'bout

PEACE AND THE VICES

an' foolin' an' laughin' in de warm sunshine. Dunno nuffin yet—co'se not! De way you an' me—an' de pines—know. Dat deah laugh don't come quite so easy fo' us, do it, sah?"

Her wonderful voice played upon his sensibilities as it always did on all who knew her, and he turned abruptly from her and walked apart for a moment. When he returned, he stood before her and said:

"Now, Mammy Lina, listen! These two tea-houses here may contain matters of interest to you. I've seen them before. I must not know, see, hear anything. Later on I might be called upon to talk under oath."

"O-oh! Mars' Doctor! Dat's not comin', is it? Ain' der no way 'round it? Oh, my little Miss Dora! Jes' kill 'er, sah! Kill 'er daid!" broke out the old woman in a fierce whisper.

"Hush, Mammy, hush! I want all your wits about you. If he's alive, he'll be court-martialed; but you and I may save him from the very worst that can happen."

"Yas, sah! Jes' you mek use er me anyways you think bes', sah. I'll tell lies—I'll kill anybody you say, sah. Doan' yer hesitate at nuffin 't all! I'se one ob de Taltys, I is, an' I ain' pesterin' 'bout

FELLOWES IS MISSING

dis ole black soul ob mine, when de fam'ly intres' is at state, sah!"

"All right, Mammy, all right! It need not go as far as that," and he laughed, but with tears in his eyes, at her sudden blaze of passion, the depth of which he only half realized. Then he added:

"I am going over there to the beach. I want to see the fish those fellows are bringing in in their nets. Mogi is noted for its fish; people come out here for fish tiffins, Mammy, in case anyone should ask you. In the meantime, while I wander about, you amuse yourself any way you like. After you look around a little, if you'd like to stay awhile—say, till dark—come out and tell me so. I'll go back to Nagasaki ahead of you. I have an engagement this evening. If you don't see anything of enough interest to keep you, tell me when you're rested, and we'll go back as soon as we have our fish cooked and eaten. It's the thing to do at Mogi."

"I understan', sah," said Mammy, who had listened breathlessly. Doctor Robb slipped a forefinger into his vest-pocket and remarked:

"You may need a little silver key to—open doors with," and he put out his hand. The woman drew back with a quick stiffening of her long neck:

PEACE AND THE VICES

"No, sah; thank you, sah. My Miss Dell done gim me her own purse befo' I lef' de house. She see me in de hall as I was a-creepin' out foxy-like, an' she say dey might be 'mergencies wot would rise up, sah."

The doctor went to the beach, and his companion took entire possession, after an insinuating manner of her own, of the nearest tea-house. She soon emerged followed by a flock of awe-struck *nesan*, headed by a radiant *obaasan*, who took the lead in kneeling and touching her old forehead to the matting, greatly to Mammy's embarrassment. The negress' face was stiffened with anxiety and disappointment, as she walked from one *chaya* to the other, a little nearer the beach. She went in and was gone a much longer time. When she came out and down the front steps, her eyes were blazing with excitement, and she was whispering to herself.

When she joined Doctor Robb down by the boats, now beached, she had assumed a nonchalance that her instinct told her this man demanded of her.

"Any good eatin' kind o' fish, sah?" she asked quietly.

"Good enough," said he, abstractedly, turning

to her and trying to read the black face that so easily hides its secrets.

"You bes' get yo' little tuffin—teffin—tiffin—dat's de 'spression! An' go on back toe Nagasaki, sah. De bright sun sutney done give me a misery in my haid dis day, yas, sah. An' I ain' goin' ter 'spose myself toe it 'gain. I'll go on back bime-by, when it gets dark an' cool. I think dis heah Mogi right nice place, sah."

The doctor seized her hand and wrung it, thereby causing gossip among the gaping fishermen.

"Mammy, you're great! If you had been born white, and French, and two hundred years ago, you'd have had a very popular *salon*!" And so they separated.

It was after midnight when Mammy reached "Ippon Matsu," so silently that even Dora (up, dressed, alert and in the entrance conservatory lying in a Hong Kong chair) heard nothing until the woman walked swiftly up the steps.

"Mammy, quick, have you found him?"

"Yes'm, I has. Dere, dere, honey chile! You go on ter de libra'y an' shut de do', an' say yo' prayers till I come fo' yer. Don't yer worry yo' little haid no mo'—Mammy done brung de cap'n home!"

PEACE AND THE VICES

The one resident European physician in active practice—an Italian—was called in to attend Kent, now physically ill from exposure and several days' starvation, save from the poison that had left him inhuman, unconscious, inert.

Jack, who remained on the ship, found his only solace in the fact that Imogen's wrath still detained and diverted her in Shanghai.

Dell kept him advised, ambiguously, of matters at "Ippon Matsu," realizing with vividness what was unescapably ahead of them.

Ensign Sault had been ashore for several days, only going off to the ship each morning and reporting directly to Captain Pehoe.

Not until two days after Mammy's trip to Mogi did the energetic young ensign report to the captain the whereabouts of the missing officer whom he had been seeking. Then, acting under Captain Pehoe's orders, he went up to "Ippon Matsu" in uniform. Sault was very young, very ambitious, very prone to overstep the unwritten laws controlling all such instructions.

No one but Mammy had been allowed to respond to any outside summons at "Ippon Matsu" since Kent's return. She met the young ensign's rather pale tense face with one of her most unprincipled smiles.

FELLOWES IS MISSING

"I wish to see Lieutenant Fellowes," he announced, making a movement to enter.

"I'se so sorry, but de cap'n jes' dis minute gone out, sah."

Mr. Sault took off his cap and wiped his smooth brow and then said, avoiding the fearless black eyes that smilingly confronted him:

"I have reason to think Lieutenant Fellowes is in this house."

"Deed 'n I wish he was, sah, you'se so 'ticular 'bout seein' him!" Her smile was now one of pure joy at seeing an old friend of the family—ingenuous, naïve, childlike.

Sault received no inspiration whatever from his boots, but continued to search for it.

"Miss Dell she's gone out too! I'd arsk yer ter come right in an' wait, sah, but I happen toe hyar her say she goin' ter tea at de Scotch lady's crost de bay! I'se 'fraid dat means 'bout seven o'clock, sah!"

"I came to see Lieutenant Fellowes on business and I shall stay until he returns," interrupted Sault, throwing himself with a boyish movement into one of the chairs on the porch.

Mammy knew he must not remain there. The house was very quiet just then, but it had not

PEACE AND THE VICES

always been so during those two days and nights. She stood a moment contemplating the obstinate figure of the intruder, and then she said:

"I'll jes' step in an' see if Mrs. Fellowes done woke up yet. She's been mighty sick—Miss Dora has. Mebbe she can tell when the cap'n he comin' in. Den you can come back hyar, bimeby, sah."

She turned, leaving the door barely ajar, assuming Ensign Sault to be of gentle birth; but it so chanced that he was not, and when she returned he was standing in the hall. Every trace of smiling was instantly stricken from Mammy's face; her head went erect like a snake's, her nostrils flattened, and her voice was unrecognizable as she whispered, close to his face:

"I s'all have ter arsk yer ter step outside, sah, not ter 'sturb Mrs. Fellowes on no 'count, de doctor he say."

"I shall wait very quietly here," said the misguided youth.

Mammy put her hand quickly inside her huge white kerchief, and when she withdrew it, Sault faced the barrel of a small pistol.

"I uster core apples wid dis heah gun when I was a young nigger down in Virginia, I did; an' I doan' reckon I'd miss many pits, even now! Yo' bes' get

FELLOWES IS MISSING

out'n dis house mighty quick, sah!" she hissed, in a sudden blaze of wrath, listening through all, for the sound she dreaded, from the room beyond the dining-room.

"This shall be reported to Captain Pehoe!" Sault exclaimed too astonished for more. Even his meagre experience recognized the all too evident savage intensity of the thoroughly aroused creature before him. He turned and went out. She bounded after him, and when she had closed the door behind her, her voice, out of its leash followed him to the gate, as did the snap of her fingers as she went on in a fury, all Africa in her face:

"Dat fo' yer ole ship! Dat fo' yer sneaky ole cap'n! Po' white trash, bot'n yer! Dis heah *my* house, dese yere *my* folks—I dass de whole damn lot ob yer, yer hyar me?"

And then when he had gone, she sat down suddenly on a Chinese tabouret near the door, trembling now from head to foot, whispering brokenly to herself:

"I—I'se mighty glad he 'sidered it bes' ter go on away out'n dis—I sutney are!"

And then came that loud, coughing unhuman groan, as of a spirit adrift in hell, from the room beyond the dining-room.

CHAPTER VI

UNDER THE CAMPHOR-TREES

“ My misfortune is that you have no need to be loved as I love.”

WHILE Mammy was making a display of basic instinct roused in defence of fire-sides, Adele wandered heart-sick, about the native town, seeking streets unfrequented by the foreign residents, with whom she had cancelled all engagements.

She ended, from habit, on the seat among the great camphor-trees back of the Osuwa Temple. Anxious to the point of physical distress, isolated socially as she had never before been in her life, she sat completely absorbed in the tragedy at “Ip-pon Matsu,” to relieve which she was entirely helpless.

She never wearied of the seat in the cool twilight of those dense trees, which shrouded every outlook, save where the boughs vouchsafed to frame a small, circular, exquisite view of the bay far below. No one was in sight. She was above the

UNDER THE CAMPHOR-TREES

endless noisy circuition at the Temple of the Bronze Horse; the cries of a passing dai-kagura, performing in the street below, had focussed all the wandering children, and thus she had the loveliest spot in Nagasaki to herself.

Taking off her hat and laying it beside her on the bench, she leaned forward, her elbows on her knees, her eyes on the Russian fleet below, down there in the shimmering, sweltering sunshine.

“ ‘Man’s merit, like the crops, has its season,’ ” she murmured to herself grimly, shuddering.

“Meaning me, and now?” demanded a cheerful voice, and Doctor Robb sank upon the bench beside her. He would have been willing to offer any odds during the twenty minutes he had deliberately been following her, that she could do nothing that would surprise him at this stage of their arrested friendship, but it was as well no one had been there to take him up, for he would have lost!

She started violently, threw both her hands out toward him, and with a long moan of “O-h, Doctor!” she burst into tears, hiding her face in her arms on the back of the seat.

In an instant he was close beside her, and after that one swift precautionary glance about, that becomes instinctive in a man of thirty, his arms

PEACE AND THE VICES

were about her, and he was whispering, his face against hers:

"You do care! You did miss me! Ah, dear, I'm so glad, so glad!"

After three or four sobbing breaths, and almost before he had finished speaking, the ineradicable diablerie of the girl's nature had returned, and she gently disengaged herself, and moved shyly away to the far end of the bench, and sat demurely preening her ruffled plumage; murmuring with bewitching coquetry:

"This is so sudden! and—and you are sitting on my hat!"

"The devil!" cried Robb, springing to his feet and walking away in justifiable wrath.

Her heart sank as he went, her eyes clung compellingly to his broad obstinate back; she gave a distinctly coaxing cough and waited, breathless.

He returned suddenly, to find her absorbed in her hat's rehabilitation. He stood in front of her and began to laugh; and after one quick comical glance up at him, she laughed too. Then he leaned over, took her hand and shook it cordially, raised his hat, and bowing low exclaimed:

"How do you do, Miss Talty? Such a delightful surprise! Where did you drop from?"

UNDER THE CAMPHOR-TREES

She beamed approval of his controlled mood, and with her free hand tapped the bench beside her invitingly.

She had never yet reached that point in her relations with any man, when humor becomes an intrusion—when love feeds in mirthless silence.

Doctor Robb had yet a little more need of patience, as he realized with a sigh, as he again sat down beside her. He loved every atom of her complex nature, most of all its complexity.

But her mood was already changing, the reaction after the first genuine laugh following days of genuine sorrow had set in, and the next glance of her eyes showed them full of tears.

"Doctor, it has been terrible! Dora and—of course you know?"

"Yes, dear, I know," he answered gently, and she did not reprove him.

"I am not wanted—anywhere. I can do nothing but leave them, and I wander about till I'm ready to drop. Dora constantly asks Mammy, in that awful whisper, where I am; and if she hears I am out of the house, somehow it quiets her."

"Poor little girl!"

"Doctor, how will it end? If I only knew what was ahead of us!"

PEACE AND THE VICES

"Prepare yourself for about the worst," he said slowly, deeming it the kindest thing to do.

"It will kill her!" she cried, her voice sharp with pain.

"No, it will not. A doctor gets to know women pretty well—only pretty well," he added gloomily, and Dell shot a glance at him, "and your sister is made of the brave old feminine stuff of a past generation, which endures much—and is but the stronger and sweeter for it. There are very few such left, I find. This younger generation of women compels my professional admiration for physique and altitude—but it stops right there!"

"Father used to say that the cry of 'good old times' was due to a very slow adjustment of one's own optical apparatus," said Dell. "I remember standing once before a great artist's painting of a mountain scene, and I ventured to speak of the incongruity between the discord in the foreground, and the peace and repose in the background. He replied: 'There always is discord in foregrounds! If we stood over there on that rugged mountain peak, and looked over here, the effect would be reversed.'"

"Alack! If we only had as good eyes as the birds, at once microscopic and telescopic," smiled

UNDER THE CAMPHOR-TREES

the doctor, willing to be proved wrong; "all the same, my little philosopher, our business is with our own environment—the foreground of thought, and women are to-day proud of the wrong things. Proud of so-called common-sense, that slays all sentiment; proud of the curse of introspection that hourly takes its pulse to see if a husband agrees or disagrees with her temperament—if so be he fails to agree, off with his head! As if her nature alone had rights—his a glove-like flexible thing, governed by the verb to fit. Luckily only one sex has leisure for pulse-feeling! Her newly discovered individualism is the real shrine before which miladi worships—the new woman, leader in this age of divorce, discontent, discord, and undigested development, that has not yet become wisdom!"

"I have a tremendous *esprit de sexe*, Doctor, and you hurt me," she said softly.

"It's because I worship woman, that I regret I do not like women better! Do you suppose I like to think this: that in my lowly, but honest, opinion an enormous percentage of divorces of the day are at the root fed—not in the outgrowth, mind you, by any means—but at the root fed by the modern wife's incapacity to love? It's the great

PEACE AND THE VICES

disillusion of the day. Does a mother's love shrivel up at the approach of evil, suffering, illness, moral or physical? Does a sister's? A daughter's? In every other human relation woman is strong, brave, fine. It's only wifehood that has discovered her to be peevish, egoistic, selfish, nowadays, oftener than is good for the world."

"Poor dear, he's always under her feet, you see," chirruped Adele, obstinately frivolous, and they both laughed.

"If she'd only feel that she is an essential part of a great social (or divine, if you will) institution as dependent upon her integrity as a building is dependent upon each single stone in its make-up! I tell you marriage is woman's work in the world, the failures are at her door."

"Oh, think of Dora!"

"Just what I am thinking of! Her marriage is not going to be a failure! All the stuff is there for failure, Heaven knows! But she has love's genius, and it can redeem, and will—all but a mere brute. Can you stand any more? I'm astride my favorite in the stables!"

"‘Physicians mend or end us,’" Adele commented sadly.

"We Americans are just now passing through

UNDER THE CAMPHOR-TREES

a sort of Virginolatry such as the world has never seen. The girl is society! She is an *enfant gâtée*, and as unhappy as such always are. The entire social system is ordered—from literature to table-talk, with an eye—both eyes—to her really unimportant development.”

“Unimportant, the future mother?”

“Yes, beside the great adult world of thinking men and women—secondary, quite! One-third of her life is spent in learning what is largely untrue, one-third in unlearning it, and the last third in learning the truth. Is there wisdom in that? Does it make for harmony? Half the wretched failures in marriage are due to her utterly false estimates. If good came out of the American system one could stand the tuning of life down to her pitch, but does it? Her right to make standards, to be heard, felt, comes later, if it’s in her at all. We men aren’t quite the fools we look, and we learned long ago that unless a woman is content in her world of manners, ethics (conservers of great principles therein—as your sister, God bless her! is conserving marriage), beautifiers of life, saints to the suffering, leaders in philanthropy, education—Lord, the field is broad enough! if she is not content there, the poison spot is in her own

PEACE AND THE VICES

heart—she will be content nowhere—she has forgotten how to love.”

“Summer thoughts in camphor!” was Adele’s sole comment, looking about at the dark thick foliage of the grove, and he shook his fist at her in a shout of laughter.

“Is it at all worth while think you, O Æsculapius, for me to struggle on a little longer, obscurely?”

“Oh, you! You haven’t lost the art of loving any more than your sister has.”

“I haven’t found it yet!”

“Dora Fellowes’ power is in her goodness, yours lies in your attractive faults.”

“Captain Fitchett said the same.”

“Fitchett? Don’t know him. Who is he?” The doctor’s oracular tone had fled.

“A man.”

“I hastily judged as much,” and the young officer’s eyes dwelt upon the view that seemed suddenly to have lost some of its charm.

There was a short silence.

“Will Dora’s love really redeem him in the end, Doctor?” the girl asked gravely.

“Life does not always deal out prizes to all who deserve them—not by a long shot. It’s not

UNDER THE CAMPHOR-TREES

so simple as that—still, I've seen a miracle or two in my day. I often think that some great soul-satisfying exploitation of all his powers might somehow readjust his balance. The best war material often lies in just such men—a little mad under the restraint of peace."

"It is so cruel—all this—so logically relentless."

"Yes, my life-work deals with the hard logic of existence, and that is why I need you so, dear—you—" he turned to her with a great glow of love upon his face.

"Me?" she cooed surprise.

"You are all the other side, the sunny, happy, absurd, fantastic, adorable, beautiful, bewildering, tantalizing, delicious side—the everlasting feminine! Ah, Adele!"

"I can think of two more adjectives, strangely overlooked," she commented severely.

He slid along the bench toward her, and she hastily lifted her hat and put it down carefully on the other side, out of harm's way—and he laughed, threw his arm out along the back of the seat behind her, and said abruptly and with smiling assurance:

"Some day, young lady, you are going to love

PEACE AND THE VICES

me. It came to me suddenly, just now. You'll stop flirting with me, stop all your little bedevillments; and you'll find out, as I have, that love is a tragedy, not a high comedy, and you will come to me 'reverently, soberly, discreetly, advisedly, and in the fear of God,' and you will give yourself to me. I dare say you'll refuse me a few more times in the interval, but you are coming just the same—some day."

Such assumption had to be punished and promptly, and Adele arose and said coldly:

"And wither forever the life happiness of that beautiful girl with Etruscan gold eyelashes? Never!"

"What kind of a girl? Who?"

"The gorgeous creature who so absorbed you the last time you were in Nagasaki. Glorious azure orbs (two, if I mistake not), a covert——"

"A what?" he cried, joyous at this first glimpse of Cupid's *avant-courier*—jealousy.

"Tan covert thing—half fitting—with straps—a dream! Oh, Dora told me. You dare not deny it!"

"She hid this covert thing well; I never saw it—I don't even know what it is. What an absurd girl you are! Don't you know who that was I

UNDER THE CAMPHOR-TREES

took ashore that day and kowtowed to? All the time my head full of another who didn't care to see me, worse luck!"

"I have absolutely no curiosity about her, Doctor Robb," replied the girl, opening her parasol and holding it at the angle she had discovered most aggravated the masculine heart.

"The admiral's wife! Daughter of the late secretary—all sorts of honorable things. Yes, indeed, and I made myself solid that day, I tell you, over tortoise-shell hair-pins, for which her soul thirsted."

Adele put back her parasol, as she walked beside him, and smiled up in his face, and said with the inflection of five tender years:

"I like you!" He looked away, and put his hands into his pockets.

They stood a moment at the top of the long flight of stone steps, dotted here and there with bright baby-life.

As she looked out over the town, her face fell, and she murmured:

"I have been so happy for a little while up here."

"With me?" he coaxed.

"With you," she said softly, and then together

PEACE AND THE VICES

they started down the great stone stairway between the temple lamps. Presently she swept him a curtsy and a roguish smile, and gave him the tips of her fingers, and he caught her meaning, and in cadence, laughing into each other's eyes, the remainder of the long descent was turned into a sort of stately minuet. And the little native children stood and stared at this new antic of those ever-absurd *ijin san*.

At the bottom he put her into her jinrikisha, arranged hurriedly to meet her at Sato's the next day, and they separated.

As she passed the Italian doctor's house on her way home, Captain Pehoe came out of it, jumped hastily into a jinrikisha and dashed toward the Bund.

CHAPTER VII

KENT GOES DOWN TO HIS JUDGMENT

“No, when the fight begins within himself,
A man's worth something. God stoops o'er his head.”

AT the end of three days Kent came out of the wilderness, and took up his life once more—broken, speechless, pitiful.

Jack made it a point to be on hand to help Dell carry the dinner through, for Dora's sake. Afterward the two men went to the summer-house with their cigars. It was a hot night; the intense humidity which foreruns a typhoon saturated the air. A large native paper lantern swung above them, dyeing their white duck uniforms pink, and furnishing enough light for each man to watch the brief eccentric life of his own cigar, individualized from any other one ever rolled into being. After a long silence, for which each was deeply grateful to the other, Kent cried suddenly:

“I'd rather put a bullet through my head than go on with it!”

PEACE AND THE VICES

"Of course; anyone would, but it wouldn't be quite so—manly, do you think, Fellowes?"

"Oh! I'm not going to. And I'll spare you even verbal heroics. The smugness of a slaked desire, the easy repentance of satiety (curs at best!), are a little less contemptible if they don't bark. If you don't know what I feel, after all these years, no amount of talk will help."

"You're dead right! I've never been able to get at the enormous stress the churches lay upon mere chin repentance. Repentance ought to act or—shut up!"

Another silence, and Fellowes again spoke:

"Jack, I shall report on board ship to-morrow morning."

"Good!"

"I've got something worse than that to face; something that——"

"O Lord!" groaned Talty, following begrudgingly a nimble imagination.

"I mean Dora. I have not dared tell her that I shall at once be put under arrest on the ship, and not see her again till—the end. I have put it off day after day; I cannot do it! It will be as if I were to take that dear sweet face—God in heaven, man, she still smiles at me!—and batter

KENT GOES DOWN TO HIS JUDGMENT

it in with my fist. That wonderful wife of mine to be dragged down into the mire of the level I have come to!"

Whatever Talty thought, he said:

"Your soul is as clean as Sunday-morning decks, Kent. There's some confounded hitch in your digestion. We'll find the remedy some day, old man, I have not the least doubt."

The other man's bare quivering nerves felt the healing of Jack's hearty tone, the great underlying kindness and forbearance in what was left unsaid.

Suddenly he burst out with:

"Why should I be given such a wife? such a friend?"

"We Taltys are no fools, Mr. Fellowes—although some of us look it—you're a blasted nuisance, I admit—but you are worth all we give you, that's why!"

And the other gave a little broken laugh, and could not speak for awhile, and his cigar went out.

"I shall make no defence, Talty; just tell the whole beastly truth and have it over. And start in on sixty dollars a month somewhere!"

"'Sixty dollars a month!' The infernal conceit of some men! 'Sixty dollars a'—do you sup-

PEACE AND THE VICES

pose people are going to fling wealth at you because you've got a Greek profile! Don't be any more of an ass than you can help, Fellowes. You'll keep your present job, the one you are built for. You'll get the best defence we can get hold of, and you'll fight every inch of the way! The proof is up to them. If it was a wretched orgy in a wife's absence I'd be bowwowed if I'd lift a finger, but I know better, Dora knows better, everyone does."

"I refuse, utterly. It is not honest. I am guilty, I deserve all they will give me. I refuse!"

Fellowes sprang to his feet and started down the two steps of the summer-house. Jack said, very gravely:

"My answer to all that, Kent, is one word—Dora."

His companion sank down suddenly where he was, as if struck, and Jack finished his cigar, and waited a long time, watching the other's relaxed figure and bowed head. Then Fellowes slowly arose, and with his eyes on the black shadow of the lone pine overhanging his home, he said very quietly: "You are right," and started across the silent compound toward the house. As he did so, Dell's voice swelled out into the night like an

KENT GOES DOWN TO HIS JUDGMENT

incense, singing after many days of silence, finally yielding to Dora's entreaty.

“ ‘ Songe à l’adieu suprême,
Tant que mon cœur battra
Toujours il te dira
Rappelle toi ! ’ ”

That evening Kent kept silence, that his wife might have the long refreshing sleep that always came to her after he had emerged from his dementia. And as she slept he watched, his soul clinging to her like a punished child, craving affection without desert.

In the morning, after Talty had gone back to the “Boston,” Kent told Dora of the arrest and court-martial that would follow his return to the ship.

After the first great cry of uncontrollable anguish, she turned from him and rushed blindly back and forth about the room, wildly gesticulating, striking her breast roughly with her clinched fist—mad with suffering. After a desperate moral wound, as after a physical, the body seeks the relief of violent movement; perhaps the survival of that primal instinct that sought frantically to expel the embedded arrow.

PEACE AND THE VICES

He sat watching her with miserable eyes, putting out his hand humbly in dumb entreaty, whenever she passed him.

By and by her steps began to falter, her arms fell, she stood still, and turning she saw him for the first time, so completely do life's crises isolate. Sitting there, bent, broken, disparate by his own miserable wrong-doing—slowly there arose within her this question: "In what way is this one defection of his different from all the others, through which I have not swerved in my devotion? Only in this: for the first time he is facing just punishment!" It was her pride then that was in rebellion, not her principle, not her love. More than ever her place was beside him, not aloof. Never had he been in such desperate need of her. There was a short struggle more, and then she went to him, and put her arms about him and drew his head back against her breast and held it there, whispering over and over the foolish words sacred to their little love-story. And after that, the mere impetus of all strong emotion once started, helped her. He clung to her in an agony of relief and gratitude. All lesser evils he could confront, if her love were still his—preserved to them both by her action that morning.

KENT GOES DOWN TO HIS JUDGMENT

The last words she said to him as he was leaving were:

"Fight, my darling! Fight *for* your sword—if not this time *with* it—for my sake, and Julie's, and your own," and she smiled, to put a little heart into him.

The final glimpse he had of her, as he went out of the gate and turned an agonized glance backward was, strangely, the one he had pictured should be the first, when he came: the wife standing on the sun-flecked lawn waving her hand to him; beside her the baby (both in white), imitating every motion of her mother's, looking from one to the other with quick motions of her pretty head, that sent the curls whirling about each time, in a golden arc.

And so Kent went down the hill to his judgment.

Talty had found on his desk in his state-room, when he went off to the ship that morning, a letter from Imogen—the first since Dora left her. The contents severed once more the oft-repaired filaments that his stanch nature had spun again and again across the ever-widening space between their two natures.

Every sentence contained its separate drop of

PEACE AND THE VICES

the poison of spite, vulgarity, chagrin, and selfishness, and yet real longing for the man's love, which she had forever lost. It began abruptly: "The admiral's wife, who has the next room to mine at this horrible hotel, got a letter this morning, from Mr. Sault of the 'Boston' (he was one of her protégés when he was a cadet), and you can imagine my horror and mortification when she told me this dreadful news about Kent Fellowes! Such a perfectly disgusting thing to happen! He always did seem such a gentleman, although as queer as Paddy's hat. It's the climate out here—I've always told you! I dare say you'll go off next, and lose yourself. All I can say is, you'll stay lost for all me! I can at least have the satisfaction of knowing I tried to stay near you, as a moral help. If disaster comes, it's your own fault, not mine. Mr. Sault says a court will be ordered; he also hinted that it was an old story with Kent Fellowes—that, of course, I was able to flatly contradict. If he's dismissed for this, he'll go straight to the dogs, of course, and I do hope Dora will have pride enough, character enough, to take Julie and leave him. Dora is a very weak, although sweet-tempered, woman (which I can't say of all the Taltys I've had the honor of meeting), and I'm so afraid

KENT GOES DOWN TO HIS JUDGMENT

she will do something silly, which will spoil her whole future. Thank goodness, I'm made of stronger stuff, so there's no use trying any matrimonial experiments on me!

"I must say I'm more than ever glad that I obeyed the voice of self-respect, and remained away from all that vulgar mess you Taltys seem to have got yourselves into. Mrs. Titterington keeps very much to herself, I must say, but she's awful nice when I do see her—only I don't like the way she dresses—you can't see her for clothes during the day, and you can't see the clothes for her at night! And Mrs. Santley and I both think she does something to her hair. The funniest part of it is that I *know* Mrs. Santley does! And she's forty, if she's a week—besides having an affair with the Belgian consul, which would create a scandal anywhere but in this 'Paris of the Orient,' and the poor old chief coming up from the 'Alert' at Woosung every four days, believing as firmly in her as on the day he married her. The Belgian has got on to the swing of the matrimonial pendulum, so all goes well—so far! Tell Dora if she really needs me, to wire and I'll come over—but if she can get on without me till after the races, I'd rather come then. As for you, I have nothing whatever to suggest."

PEACE AND THE VICES

Talty had not known how hard a thing a youthful illusion is to kill until he read this letter and realized that, after all, there had been a little something left within his very weary heart, with life in it; and yet so happily was this man constituted that he could lean back in his chair and laugh at his wife's irresistibly dry humor, to which she was so strangely unrelated.

There was at present only one thing to do: to reply in such a way that Imogen would, for the present, remain in Shanghai. This he did at once, and with success.

When Lieutenant Fellowes went over the side of the "Boston," the officer of the deck was his old friend Nugent.

Fellowes, saluting him stiffly, reported: "Returned on board, sir," and passed rapidly aft toward the wardroom ladder; his face very white, his blue eyes almost black with the super-excitation of his whole being.

The officer of the deck turned to his messenger:

"Tell the orderly to report to the captain that Lieutenant Fellowes has returned on board."

Fellowes went directly to his state-room, drew the curtain, and was shifting into uniform, when there came a rap on his door-frame.

KENT GOES DOWN TO HIS JUDGMENT

"Well, what is it?"

"The captain wishes to see you in the cabin, sir," replied a formal military voice from the other side of the curtain.

"All right. Tell the captain I'll report immediately."

A few moments later, at the cabin door, he said to the marine on duty:

"Report my name to the captain," and he waited with clinched teeth until the orderly returned, saluted, and gave the captain's message.

Fellowes entered the cabin. It was a purely official room; bare of all photographs, curios, Oriental hangings, or even flowers, which so often transform the cabin of a ship into a haven to eyes an-hunger for home.

Captain Pehoe was a tall, sallow, dark-browed man. He sat at his desk with his back turned, writing, when Fellowes entered and stood in silence. Those prolonged moments of studied negligence stung the young officer like a lash across his face. Finally the commanding officer turned slowly about in his revolving chair, and said:

"Well, Lieutenant Fellowes, what explanation have you to make for your absence?"

"I have none, sir."

PEACE AND THE VICES

"I suppose you are aware of the gravity of your offence?"

"I fully recognize it, sir."

"Consider yourself under suspension, sir. I shall report the matter to the commander-in-chief for such action as he may deem proper. I think it only fair to warn you that I shall prefer charges against you." Fellowes slowly inclined his head.

"Have you any further orders, sir?"

"No, sir," and the captain swung back to his desk.

After Fellowes' dismissal, Captain Pehoe pressed his bell, and upon the orderly's appearance, commanded:

"Tell the officer of the deck to enter in the log that Lieutenant Fellowes is under suspension to await the action of the commander-in-chief," and so Dora's secret was nailed to the mast, and left flaunting for all eyes to read.

The suspended officer returned at once to his state-room, where his brother-in-law soon joined him, and remained with him from then to the end, every moment his own duties made possible, to emphasize an identity of interest in every way his generous heart could devise.

Fellowes had always been an officer universally

KENT GOES DOWN TO HIS JUDGMENT

respected for his professional enthusiasm and devotion, and for his impeccable good-breeding, which counts for so much in the close vicinage of wardroom life. His was not the nature to command the great popularity and warm affection that ran out so easily to Talty; ashore, from one end of the service to the other; and afloat, from the cabin to the forecastle.

But Kent had his few friends who never swerved in their faith in him as an officer, held too long for his own good, in the leash of circumstances.

At the noon breakfast in the wardroom an unpremeditated, halting, but sincere effort was made to draw the suspended officer into the general conversation, and relieve the painful tension of his thin white face, and before the meal was over, Talty was thankful to see it had obviously relaxed. His heart glowed with gratitude toward his shipmates. When a soldier gets his bullet, the men beside him in the ranks, in all the murk and roar, are none the worse soldiers for dragging the stricken one apart and lowering him gently to the ground.

Three days after Captain Pehoe's report on Fellowes' case had reached the admiral at Shanghai, the flag-ship arrived in Nagasaki. And two hours

PEACE AND THE VICES

later the "Alert" followed, to help furnish the required quota of seven officers ranking Lieutenant Fellows, necessary to form a court, should one be ordered by the commander-in-chief, after further inquiry into Pehoe's charges.

As the American flag-ship was approaching her anchorage, the clear notes of the "Boston's" bugle rang out over the bay, calling away the gig. Captain Pehoe lost no time in taking his place alone in the stern-sheets, and giving the order to shove off. The men gave way together, steering for the flag-ship, the "coach-whip," denoting an official visit, fluttering from the bow-staff, on a line with the captain's black brows.

As soon as he was announced on the flag-ship, Pehoe went to the admiral's cabin. It was a suite of rooms vivid with that daring Oriental scheme of colors which never clashes. Brocades, embroidered hangings, pillows from every port in the East; a huge "hawthorne" vase from Canton; Benares brasses; ivories from Colombo; precious old monkey *kakemonos* from Kioto (thought, by the admiral at least, to be the work of Sosen himself); *mon fukusas*, blue, with golden eyes; potted palms and plants; and photographs everywhere bespoke the soul gregarious.

KENT GOES DOWN TO HIS JUDGMENT

Over the admiral's desk, bristling with papers, was a large water-color of his beautiful young wife. The mahogany case enthroning the ship's silver punch-bowl and candelabra, presented by the city whose name she bore, challenged attention close by the door. Captain Pehoe felt physically cold and nauseated with repulsion. There was as great a psychical difference as physical between the two men. A perfect digestion, a persistent cheerfulness, a very kind heart, had preserved to the admiral perennial youth. He was a large man, rotund of figure, boyish blue eyes, a ruddy color in his cheeks, and abundance of silvery white hair. A heavy mustache, worn Prussian fashion, gave him the air of a military fop, abetted by an immaculate uniform, every ornament of which shone brilliantly. His speech and movements were free from the lethargy of age.

After the ordinary greetings between the two officers, the admiral went to his desk and withdrew from a pigeon-hole a large official paper, and said briskly:

"See here, Pehoe, do you insist on pressing these charges against Lieutenant Fellowes? You know what a remarkably fine officer he is. Sit down, sit down."

PEACE AND THE VICES

A look of intense irritation passed over the captain's face.

"Admiral, a drunkard has less right to be in our service than in any profession on earth."

"You forget the Church, Captain," suggested the admiral slyly.

"Pardon me, sir, I do not. That is a mission, an inspiration, a consecration, not a profession!"

"Quite so, quite so!" cried the admiral, nervously beginning to finger his bell, and then recalling himself with a jerk.

"As I ask only for justice myself, Admiral, I give only justice," announced the man of poor circulation.

"Now, do you know, Pehoe, I'm putting all my pile on mercy? You may be able to bluff it on justice, I confess I don't dare!" cried gayly the man of perfect digestion, deeply regretting that no one was there to hear him badger "old Pehoe."

"I respectfully submit, sir, that Lieutenant Fellowes should be court-martialed," Pehoe's voice was as near a sneer as he dared venture. A quick flash of temper darted from Admiral Titterington's eyes; it was his privilege to steer the conversation in that cabin, his alone! But after a

KENT GOES DOWN TO HIS JUDGMENT

moment's silence the handsome autocrat said quietly, stroking his white mustache:

"It's his first offence, Captain Pehoe. I have seen lives snuffed out by harshness. If you had been willing, I was rather inclined to let it go with a very severe reprimand—and keeping it in the squadron—under the circumstances."

The particular circumstance through which the admiral viewed the case happened to be the pretty pleading of his wife the night he left Shanghai, when she begged for all the leniency possible for the man whose sweet-faced wife she had met one afternoon in Nagasaki. The admiral found nothing in life as difficult as to say nay to that wayward, much-petted wife of his, accustomed to having every mood taken seriously, every wish anticipated, always victorious because assuming blindness to the possibility of defeat.

If Captain Pehoe had had the faintest inkling of anything so shamelessly uxorious, his manner would have indicated, even more plainly than it did, his low estimate of the admiral's ethics. As it was he said stiffly:

"It seems to me, Admiral, there is no surer guarantee for a second offence than to be lenient with a first."

PEACE AND THE VICES

"Not always, not always," mused the admiral. There was a short pause, and then he added quickly:

"Well, Captain, of course if you insist, I shall be compelled to order a general court, much as I regret the necessity for it. My time is up in a few months, it's been a happy cruise, I'm deeply sorry for this," he added a little sadly. His use of the word "happy" was sheer blasphemy to the ears of the younger man, but he held his peace and listened:

"But you know, Captain Pehoe, how very difficult it is to prove drunkenness; and one thing strikes me in this report of yours: no one from your ship saw Fellowes in this condition. What evidence have you?"

"He was attended by a resident physician here, sir. An Italian (or, as he put it, three-quarters Italian, and one-half French!); I went to see him and I have persuaded him, with difficulty, to consent to testify before the court. He tells me that Lieutenant Fellowes, during his absence, was suffering from acute alcoholism."

The admiral's lips pursed themselves for a whistle, and then meeting the other's eye abandoned it, knowing full well that this man ac-

KENT GOES DOWN TO HIS JUDGMENT

corded him no appreciable specific gravity whatever.

"Well, that will be evidence sufficient to convict. I will order the court to meet within a few days. Sit down, Pehoe; what's the rush? I've got a little liqueur Scotch here, the colonel of those Fusilier fellows gave me in Hong Kong, I'd like you to try it. I never saw anything to touch it myself. It disenfranchises a man of sixty in ten minutes, by Jove! What's that you say? Oh! that's one on me! Beg pardon, Pehoe, I quite forgot you do not drink. Of course, of course. I do, a little now and then myself, because—well, because I haven't any reason not to. Some men have a reason. I quite understand. Good-morning, good-morning, sir," and then the admiral leaned back and chuckled to himself.

CHAPTER VIII

TOO MANY CHAPERONES

“To be wise and love
Exceeds man’s might.”

“**M**AMMY, for gracious sake, take this hat away and bury it deep in the garden! In a shady noisome corner, please, where it’s not likely to take root. I think without a single exception I’m the most hideous-looking girl on earth to-day! Some days I’m not so bad—but to-day I look like a barmaid of thirty-eight thirsty summers. Mammy, come here, when I speak to you! Now stand still—not there—right here! Now, tell me on your word of honor, S. Carolina, does it positively sicken you to look at me in this hat?”

“Toe tell yer de plain troof, Miss Dell, I ain’ feelin’ fus’ rate to-day!” said Mammy roguishly, and Dell flew at her and shook her, till every tooth in her black face showed in one great grin of delight.

Then the girl sat down breathless, professing a

TOO MANY CHAPERONES

marked relief. She was again seated in front of the mirror, close beside which were two chairs, piled with all of her hats and some of her sister's. She slapped one after another viciously down upon her now dishevelled head, removing each with a louder groan of growing discontent.

"Why is it, Mammy, that there are days when one looks like the very mischief, and nothing suits? And days when one looks perfectly dear in any old rag of a thing?"

"I'se come ter de 'clusion, Miss Dell, it all depends on de eyes we's a dressin' fur," and Mammy looked the picture of belated innocence, smoothing down her kerchief over her ample bosom. The answer was a discarded hat aimed at the turbaned head, which Mammy deftly caught and replaced upon the dressing-table, with a low gurgle of laughter.

"I won't wear any! It's very smart not to—I'll be smart, for a change," announced Dell, springing to her feet. But Mammy became serious at once, and scolded, oblivious of Miss Talty's twenty years.

"'Smart!' Dere ain' nuffin' smart 'bout gwine out'n de do', in de bro-o-rd daylight, widout'n a hat on de haid! No'm, dere ain'. It's bold an'

PEACE AND THE VICES

it's sassy! Young ladies ain' got no gumption now'days, actin' like a passel ob boys! I ain' s'prised de cer'mony ob matrimony are gettin' mo' an' mo' onpop'lar eb'ry y'ar! Dat's so, Miss Dell! no use yer pokin' fun at yer ole Mammy. Come heah, miss, an' 'have yo'self! Set right down, an' mek up yo' min' ter wear one ob dese yere! An', honey, jes' ter please yer ole nigger Mammy, lemme tie on one er dose sorf' purty white veils dat look so sweet an' ladylike! Please, Miss Dell!"

Dell yielded to the coaxing voice, partly because it merely indorsed her own old-fashioned prejudices, and selecting a simple straw hat trimmed with white mulle, she skewered it on. Then, to the old servant's unfeigned joy, she tied over all a veil of thinnest white tulle.

Following a mental carom of her own, Mammy said abruptly, with dancing eyes:

"I dunno if you rightly 'member a gent'man who use' ter visit we-all in Washington, Miss Dell? His name was—now, I had dat name all right minute ago! Oh, yes! Doctor Robb. 'Member him, missy?"

"I recall, dimly, such a person. Go on with your fairy story," replied a very haughty young lady, absorbed in white castor gloves.

TOO MANY CHAPERONES

"Well, one day he up an' he says de mos' curious-est thing ter me. I wan' ter arsk yer 'bout it, Miss Dell, 'fo' I done fo'get all 'bout it. He says: 'Mammy, you're great'—jes' like dat! Yes'm, he did! An' den he says: 'If you'd a been French, an' not a nigger, you'd er kep' a very pop'lar saloon!' Yes'm, he sutney did! An' yet de doctor he's jes' de mos' puffleckest gent'man I ever did see since yo' pa died!'"

Even Dora's sad heart responded to the glad young laugh that rang through the silent bungalow. But Dell went instantly to her sister in contrition, and did not leave her side until she had brought the old sweet smile back upon her stricken face, turned always toward the harbor and its ever-changing colony of ships.

Then the bell rang and Dell's face flamed into a sudden blaze, her eyes fiercely challenging comment meanwhile.

Dora looked up, then down at the sewing lying in her lap, and asked demurely:

"Going on a poster-hunt, dear?"

"No-o, not to-day. I'm going up on the ridge, where one gets a view of the other side of things."

"Don't go so far alone; take Mammy."

"I shall not need Mammy."

PEACE AND THE VICES

"Oh! Well, bring him back to dinner. I mean it, Dell, really. Of course I could not see anyone else—just now—but somehow a doctor always understands things."

"'Him? Doctor?' who under the canopy are you talking about, Dora Fellowes?"

"I couldn't tell you why to save me, Dell, but I suddenly thought of Leigh Robb."

"Well, I should think you couldn't!" exclaimed the other, then she stooped and caressed her sister, whispering: "Are you sure, Dora, dear, you do not mind my leaving you for a little while—perfectly sure? And you will not come too?"

Just then Julie burst into the room, and pattered straight to her mother's arms, chattering, gurgling, panting, with a breathless *amah* at her heels. And the young mother looked up smiling and said: "You see?" and so Dell left her; going forthwith to the drawing-room, where she displayed no surprise upon finding Doctor Robb awaiting her, looking very fresh, and boyish, and extremely cheerful. They started out at once; and Dora hearing the gate slam, arose and watched them from her window, Mammy peering over her shoulder, and when the two without had disappeared, the two within exchanged glances, and

TOO MANY CHAPERONES

shook their heads smiling, at the inexplicable ways of Miss Adele Talty.

It seemed a pity after all the long haggling at the *kuruma* stand below "Ippon Matsu," and the careful selection of five muscular coolies, that they were allowed so little figure in the expedition of the young couple. The two natives whose lot it was to draw the lighter burden of Miss Talty's slight form, rejoiced loudly over the three to whom the heavy bulk of the doctor had fallen; who repaid the scorn later, with interest. For after Robb had minutely exploited the back of Adele's pretty head for half an hour, a strong thirst for her face made him spring impatiently out of his jinrikisha and catch up with hers; where surcease of suffering came to him, tramping beside her with his hand on her lacquered wheel-guard. And so they went up the long incline. It was now the turn of Robb's coolies to jeer and trail along with uplifted shafts, watching with satisfaction their brethren ahead, bent to their task and panting rhythmically.

After once attaining the joy of Dell's profile, it was not surprising that Robb's jinrikisha-men continued to bless their good luck, and when they reached the summit, they felt called upon to stand

PEACE AND THE VICES

treat at the tea-house for their dripping companions, congratulating them insolently upon their muscle, feeling their legs and arms with long indrawn breaths of burlesque admiration, while they waited for the tea and tobacco-*bon*.

Walking a little apart from the clamor at the *chaya*, Adele and the doctor stood upon a knoll and looked off across the deep valley to the volcanic pile of mountains beyond, the sapphire waters of Shimabara Gulf on the right. The hot humid air came in puffs, the threatened typhoon having suddenly veered off to sea, leaving only the taste and smell of it in the air ashore—and much gratitude.

They stood looking out beside each other, in the silence always induced by great depths, great heights, great distances—vainly struggling after the meaning that seems hidden, couchant, waiting for recognition. One feels very close to nature's secret at such times, and eyes look their longing to surprise it, ears listen intently for the pulse of it, the soul stretches to its limit in the effort to grasp it. But no poet, no philosopher that ever lived has caught more than a symbolic meaning in nature—the real message, unrelated to humanity, remains unread. And it always ends with a

TOO MANY CHAPERONES

sigh, a turning away, a reassertion of life's old detail with which we must go on, pretending contentment.

"It's not digestible—a view like that, is it, Doctor Robb?" murmured Dell.

He turned to her with an expression of pleasure.

"I believe our minds have been running neck and neck over the same course, Miss Adele. You expressed my exact thought then. Oh, I do like that so! That mental kinship between a man and a woman. I believe the world is divided, in some esoteric fashion, into psychic tribes; above all questions of blood, language, sex, or association. One knows it instantly on meeting. Hatred is a tribal antagonism; indifference, tribal incommunicableness. I've felt it strongly with a woman of sixty, and even more strongly with a little boy of five—both chance acquaintances. We looked into each other's eyes and understood. It's one of the things ahead of us, I suppose, that will be but the kindergarten of future generations."

"'Oh! but the long, long while the World shall last!'" she murmured, her eyes on the distant mountains, and he suddenly stooped and kissed her hand, and then turned away and said confusedly:

PEACE AND THE VICES

"I couldn't help it. I'll be good, as the children say—but you are such a—such a satisfaction to me somehow! Ridiculous, isn't it?"

"Very," she said serenely.

Then the young officer began that entirely fruitless search in Japan, within a certain radius of any village, for a quiet spot to sit apart from either the all-pervading paddy-fields, or the ubiquitous curiosity of infant Japan. After much looking about, they spied a little island of trees in an ocean of "honorable rice," and taking the only path vouchsafed them, they walked along the usual tiny ridge of turf between the highly cultivated patches of the sacred grain.

Under the largest bamboo, and further parasoled by a dark-leaved camellia-bush, the doctor spread a red jinrikisha blanket for Adele and then he sank at her feet with a great sigh of contentment.

At last he had her to himself for one holy hour, insulated from all other influences; the mystery of that view at their feet, his only rival. He felt for a manuscript in his breast, withdrew his hand and waited for the right moment. To get her thus apart from the hungry hordes of men whom his rather bruised imagination always pictured clam-

TOO MANY CHAPERONES

oring for a glance from his lady-love's mischievous eyes, was almost too perfect a thing to have happened—he felt a sudden suspicion of it, alert for disaster. It was just as well, for it came in the form of one little native maid picking her way relentlessly toward them over the ridge of grass. Then in twos and threes and half-scores the children of the village followed, and came and stood beside the Americans and gazed upon them round-eyed, silent, unobtrusive; but for all purposes of successful courtship of a difficult young woman with a rampant sense of the ridiculous, absolutely fatal. Twenty-six little imperturbable chaperones and others shouting shrilly in the distance, Adele was safe from manuscripts for that day, and the doctor's heart froze with disappointment one minute, and blazed with fury the next. Of course Dell, in the innocence of her affectionate heart, began to smile and talk to them, in face of the doctor's vehement protest. The children clustered closely, boys came flying bare-legged over the ribbons of turf; or girls more sedately, subdued betimes into a joyless vicarious motherhood under the burden of fat babies asleep strapped to their backs, in all sorts of positions, mostly suggestive of instant strangulation. This last phase of the calamity put

PEACE AND THE VICES

the finishing touches to the doctor's attack of irritability and he cried in helpless wrath:

"Stop smiling at them! of course they'll hang on like grim death, who wouldn't?"

"Now I know what it is to be 'the cynosure,' and do you know, Doctor, I like it!"

"Oh, I didn't know. Tell me when you've had enough," growled he, throwing himself flat and burying tortured eyes.

"Oh, Doctor! please look at this tiny one with the red tassel." No answer came, he did not stir.

"I have my opinion of a man who has no place in his heart for dear little innocent babies"—apparently this man had none.

There was a pause, and then in a plaintive tone she murmured:

"All right, Doctor Robb, I will send them away. There is something in your attitude that suggests discomfort—it is your afternoon. I'll give them a few *sen* and then you tell them to go." The doctor was on his feet shouting:

"Do nothing of the kind!" but it was too late. The coppers had fallen into the little brown hands, and high staccato cries had gone forth announcing that the foreign devils were paying

TOO MANY CHAPERONES

money for nothing, after the strange way they often had heard about. The ridge of turf silhouetted a frieze of flying figures.

"Now please send them off, Doctor."

"Oh, yes! send them away! Sounds simple, doesn't it? Now watch me try!" Gestures and voice were indeed tragic as he yelled:

"*Piggi! piggi!* this minute! you horrid little heathens! You observe how quickly they *piggi?*" he sneered down at Dell parenthetically.

The little circle moved back a few steps to give space for this fascinating impromptu performance that was whiling away, so pleasantly, the long hot afternoon. Again cries flew from throat to throat that a strolling theatrical foreign troupe was among them, and not only free as their own *saru-mawashi* or *dai-kagura*, but giving money.

"You see how it works? Easiest thing! Watch 'em *piggi*—O Lord!" groaned Robb, and Dell went into shrieks of laughter which, after a time, ended in a thin sort of whimper from sheer weakness. This somehow struck the fancy of the children, and they began to laugh too, inextinguishably, jumping up and down with glee. It was the best performance they had seen in many a long day, away up there in their little mountain home!

PEACE AND THE VICES

Drawing in a deep breath, once more the doctor attacked them with his whole vocabulary:

"Now then, *damatte, mina same and sare hayaku! Mo yorashii*, or I'll call the *kebu, jiki ni!* Do you hear? You'd better *abunai*, you little *kitanai nezumi! Watakushi's* as mad as a hornet, by jingo! *Piggi! sare! yuke!* And—and that's every word I know of the confounded lingo!" he added, sitting down and wiping his dripping face. And the others were in hysterics, Dell leading the chorus.

Presently he turned toward his faithless companion and remarked, with acerbity:

"So glad you're enjoying the afternoon, Miss Talty."

"Oh, Doctor, if you could see your own face! I've always been told I had a contagious laugh, but I see you're immune." Dell wiped her eyes and fanned herself with his straw hat.

He turned a slow, grieving glance upon the faithful, admiring circle hedging them in, and then said gently:

"If you knew how I've thought and dreamed of these hours you gave to me! It is maddening! If it was something I could rise up and smite—but these little scraps! It's the very——"

TOO MANY CHAPERONES

"Yes, it is," she hastily interposed, and won a rather stiff-lipped smile from her forlorn companion.

And then they arose and he folded up the blanket and they went their way back to the tea-house. The audience followed and hived once more about them, but the doctor's spirit was broken. To placate him, Dell proposed walking part way home down the long hill, and he sent the jinrikishas on ahead, telling them in his seaport jargon to await them at the second tea-house.

"Ah! this is something like!" he cried, happy once more, as they started away together. He held over her head his large green-lined pongee sun-umbrella, thereby winning proximity. She darted right and left plucking wild flowers and ferns along the banks of the road, bringing them to him to carry for her, and everything she did was perfect in his eyes.

He believed strongly that if this state of siege at "Ippon Matsu" continued a week longer (barring out all men, but himself, by a miracle), he would succeed in so surrounding her with his love that the habit of looking to him for the dangerous joy of being beloved would be formed, and work eventually in his favor. If that week (however

PEACE AND THE VICES

full of agony to others) did not crown his life with happiness, he should, to the end of his days, feel that he had not deserved it.

But fortune was in a spiteful mood that day, and bent on knotting threads.

The doctor had spied high up, growing apparently out of bare rocks, a tiny clump of ferns and climbed after them, returning to find Adele sailing along far down the road, beside her a tall, heavily built man, who had evidently just descended from his private jinrikisha which was following empty, at his heels; also three coolies in dark-blue livery indicating a foreign resident of some consequence.

The brief ejaculation that fell from Stoneleigh Robb's lips contained at least the vocabulary of a prayer, if not the spirit. He felt rush over him that first hot flush of resentment which introduces us to an attack of jealousy, quickly followed by its deadly chill. He lingered in the rear, feeding his rage upon the fell sight ahead of him. Presently Adele turned and awaited him, the enemy beside her talking earnestly the while, his eyes never leaving her face.

"We waited for you," she said inanely as one does to tide over an awkward situation, recognizing the young officer's condition at a glance, and

TOO MANY CHAPERONES

rejoicing exceedingly in her power over men's moods.

"So I observe," Robb heard himself say, with disgust at his want of control over the forces within him.

"Doctor D'Estrées, I want you to know my friend and—shall I say shipmate?—Doctor Robb of the 'Boston.' "

"Doctor Roobb! Eet ees a gr-r-eat pleasure to meet a colleague so far from our common base of supplies."

The Italian bowed low, smiled radiantly—their hands met.

"About three miles and a half, I should say," grunted the younger man, without enthusiasm.

"Ah-h! You mistek' my meaning—qui-i-te! I mean nort the chemist down there—no! Bot the great schools of our profession—Paris, Vienna, Bologna, yes and your New York al-so."

"Thanks," drawled Robb so offensively that Dell gave him a glance meant to wither, and took the lines of conversation in firm hands. Whereupon the American experienced shame and remorse, and sought to redeem himself—but it was too late. The Italian had taken in at once the whole situation, and from being amused by the other man's

PEACE AND THE VICES

mood, he had become suddenly enraged. He had made one advance toward this cold calculating American; it had been repelled. He should be taught a lesson, this boy! The unquenchable Italian instinct for drama was aroused, and for the first time since meeting her at "Ippon Matsu," there was crystallized within him an intention regarding the girl whose charm had abided with him. The blood ran more quickly through D'Estrées' veins than it had in many a long day, as he turned abruptly away from Robb toward Adele, and said in his deep beautiful voice:

"As I was saying: I rode fourteen miles to my pa-a-tient thees morning, I perform the—I mean, I did what I could—four hours en route, remember! And when I left the house the father—now, what do you the-e-nk he said to me? Eet seems he stordies the English, as all the world must do on the road to success. He bowed double, he drew the long breath of ceremony, and said (one word jumping over the back of the orther): 'I hop' you weel call again very soon, when you have a leisure hour!'" Adele matched this with O Haru's latest, and then D'Estrées looked at his watch, apologized, shouted to his lagging *kurumamen*, and explained with his usual rush of words and many gestures:

TOO MANY CHAPERONES

"The Canadian mail mos' be een, I mos' tear myself away. And you weel give me the evening for a dinner at my house? Choose exactly your own day, guests, your chaperone, your *ménu*. I want you, Mees Tality—all the rest ees bot the fra-a-me. We weel have music together. You sing, I can see by the throat. Doctor Roobb—have I the nem?—you weel al-so give me the honor? *A rivederci!*" With a shout and a dash the liveried servants clattered off in a little cloud of dust.

Adele's heart was beating fast from the clash between her knights, which she felt as keenly as a maiden might watching a joust with spears, in the old days of deeds when words were only just being born here and there out of the chaos of silence.

"How long has this been going on, may I ask?" came humbly from the suffering survivor.

"What an uncomplimentary question! As if the date could be any other than the first day that he saw me!"

She sought his glance smiling, but he looked straight ahead, his handsome profile very white and rigid. And then his obvious unhappiness went to her heart, and to reinstate his peace, so repeat-

PEACE AND THE VICES

edly disturbed that afternoon, she crossed the road and said the only thing in the only way that would make him forget all else:

"Doctor, I'm so tired!"

Instantly he was another man, full of gentle solicitude, regrets, suggestions. He led her to the roadside and sat beside her, holding the umbrella with one hand and fanning her with the other, and she thanked him pathetically, closing her eyes. Whereupon he dropped all else and felt her pulse; an impossible task, his own was so insistent.

"I certainly am an utter brute! It's the sun, you poor child!"

"I think so too—I mean the sun!" murmured the half-swooning one, always so pale she could count upon herself without fear. Her only intention was to make him happy once more in the mere joy of caring for her, which being accomplished she revived slowly. Then he left her and went on to recall their jinrikishas, as he would not consent to her walking.

"Oh, I'm so glad I'm a woman!" the girl murmured to herself when alone, leaning back against a boulder with closed eyes, smiling.

So they went back as they came, he walking be-

TOO MANY CHAPERONES

side her jinrikisha, at peace with the world. All would have gone well if the coolies had not chosen the Oura Road instead of the Maminohira Hill, thereby passing D'Estrées' house, who may or may not have been responsible for that choice.

At any rate there he was waiting at his gate, in spotless white duck, dark-blue *cummerbund* and flowing tie, and he pounced upon them as they passed, with a boyish shout:

"Ah-ha! Mees Tality! I have been hoping exactly thees would happen. I watch the sem as an old cat for you and—for Doctor Roobb," he turned to the other man with the lowest of salutes, a broad sweep of the arm, a shrug, an uplifted eyebrow, a studiedly false smile.

Robb stood once more frozen, preoccupied by a fast-growing hatred—the sunshine gone, hope in his breast simply awaiting burial.

"You weel come een and pour once the tea for an old bachelor, yes? You and—your friend. One cup, two bites of hot toast, not ten minutes of your time. Does that nort sound tempting? Confess! Come! while we spic', the toast ees getting cold, come!" His hand was out, his manner irresistible, and before she realized it Adele, with guilty pleading eyes upon the younger man, was within the ene-

PEACE AND THE VICES

my's gates, avowing a great hunger and thirst. Robb took his evil mood by the throat and they went in. Tea was served on a little loggia at the back of the house, overlooking a quaint Japanese garden. Then they went into the house again, and D'Estrées went to the piano and played an andante of Beethoven's with that gentle padded touch that cannot be taught; and Adele sang one verse of "Lehn deine Wang an meine Wang," with such exquisite tenderness that Robb forgot his woes, and the Italian his English; and it darted through him that perhaps he had commenced a game with double-edged tools.

When they left, Adele's hands were full of great pink lotus blooms, her cheeks aflame, her eyes dancing in the old way that had wrought disaster so often before.

At the gate D'Estrées, sure of the American officer's eyes, travestied adoration, laughing and saying in his deep vibrating voice:

"*Senorina mia*, I can see—eet ees inevitable—eet has come—there ees now no escap' for me! And I mos', from now, see you each day, once each day. Oh, I know well, you weel hide; your black woman weel mek' the leetle fib at the door: 'Mees Dell she's gone out, so sorry, sah!' " (He

TOO MANY CHAPERONES

had Mammy's voice and smile to perfection.) "But, just the sem', I shall see you each day. Eet ees a pathognomonic of love, to be exacting—the whiter the fla-a-me, the greater the heat to maintain eet—I appeal to your friend, no? Good-night, you have med me very happy, I thank you both. Good-night."

He stood leaning over his gate and watched them as they went up the road, and he said to himself:

"So! A Saxon would teach a Latin the lesson of woman! Did he think—the cold, inert, fish-blooded thing!—that a D'Estrées could be easily overborne in an affair of this sort? We shall see, what we shall see!"

"Shall I throw these away?" asked Robb at the gate of "Ippon Matsu," gazing down at the wilted ferns in his hands to which he had been faithful.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" was her answer, holding out her hand and fixing him with reproachful eyes. And he was a long time transferring them from his hand to hers. At the door he said, now quite master of himself:

"So the Italian pleases you?"

"As a friend, yes; as a lover, perhaps; but as a——"

PEACE AND THE VICES

“As a——?”

“Never, never, never, as a——” she got inside the door, and peered back at him through a crack —“as a husband!”

“Adele!” he cried springing forward. But the door was shut in his face, and there was no response to his soft coaxing tattoo, save an exact imitation of it on the inside of the door, and then complete silence.

But somehow, Leigh Robb went back to the ship happy.

CHAPTER IX

UNDER ARREST

“What a thing friendship is, world without end!”

ONE intensely hot afternoon a few days later, Fellowes and his brother-in-law were seated in the state-room of the suspended officer, when Lieutenant Nugent appeared in the open door, in his hand a large official envelope. He was in frock-coat and wore side-arms; his face was pale, and as he saluted there was the look in his eyes of a dumb animal in intense pain. There was a pause, during which Fellowes arose, and squared his shoulders unconsciously as he faced his brother officer. Nugent's sad eyes clung to the port-hole over Kent's shoulder, as he said in a voice devoid of expression:

“I am directed, sir, by the commanding officer to hand you the charges and specifications preferred against you by the commander-in-chief. You are to consider yourself as under arrest, and the—and the captain has ordered me to demand your sword.”

PEACE AND THE VICES

"He might have spared you that!" cried Talty. Fellowes raised his hand commanding silence, and with quiet dignity reached over for his sword and belt and handed them to Nugent, who again saluted, swung to the right on one heel and marched stiffly away.

The other two listened in silence to the rattle of the belt-buckle against the sword, growing fainter and fainter as the bearer walked away.

"He might have spared you that, damn him!" repeated Talty, of the two apparently much the more moved.

Kent stood leaning against his bunk, his back turned.

"You are not just, Jack. The captain is a perfectly fair, honorable man, and he's well within the regulations."

"Only he isn't quite big enough to be merciful," commented Doctor Robb's quiet voice at the door, and they knew he had heard and understood.

Entering and drawing the curtain after him, he added:

"Fellowes, if you do not fight this case you will never get that sword back." Talty nodded approval behind Kent's back. When he at last turned toward them, they saw the face of a man

UNDER ARREST

suddenly stricken with age, and pinched with the despair born of self-failure.

Handing the envelope to Talty, he sank on the edge of his bunk saying:

"Read it, Jack, I cannot."

Talty now sat on the folding-stool, waving the doctor into the one chair in front of the desk; then with nervous hands he broke the seal, glanced over the lengthy contents and ejaculated:

"Get a brace on yourself, old man, it's about as bad as they could make it." The officer on the bunk shrank, and his head sank lower on his breast, and Talty made haste to read with monotonous rapidity:

Charges, and specifications of charges, preferred by the Commander-in-Chief United States Naval Force, Asiatic Station, against Kent Fellowes, Lieutenant, United States Navy:

CHARGE I.

Absence from station and duty without leave.

Specification.

In that the said Kent Fellowes, a lieutenant in the United States Navy, attached to and serving as such on board the United States ship "Boston," a vessel belonging to the United States Naval Force on the Asiatic Station, did on the second day of August, eighteen hundred and ninety-seven, absent himself from said vessel without leave

PEACE AND THE VICES

from proper authority, and did remain so absent until the seventh day of the month aforesaid.

CHARGE II.

Drunkenness.

Specification.

In that the said [and so forth, and so forth] was, while absent from said ship and ashore, in the city of Nagasaki, Empire of Japan, on or about the second day—and so forth, and so forth—under the influence of intoxicating liquor and unfit for duty.

CHARGE III.

Scandalous conduct tending to the destruction of good morals.

Specification.

In that the said [and so forth, and so forth] did on or about the second day of August, eighteen hundred and ninety-seven, by reason of the excessive use of intoxicants become incapacitated for the proper performance of duty, this to the scandal and disgrace of the Naval service.

R. R. TITTERINGTON,

Rear Admiral, U. S. Navy,

Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Naval Force,
Asiatic Station.

U. S. Flagship ———.

Nagasaki, Japan, August 13, 1897.

The only sound in the room was the buzz of the electric fan, reasserting itself.

UNDER ARREST

Robb broke the silence which followed the reading, saying in his usual tranquillizing tone:

"How do they expect to prove charge second? I managed to keep clear of all absolute knowledge—I can swear to it."

"Same here," said Talty dryly, who would have used the vernacular at the gates of heaven.

"I shall plead guilty to all three charges," came with decision from the bunk.

"You told me you would fight it!" cried Talty.

"I had not seen the charges—I did not realize it—the spell of a man's home—was upon me—it was not clear to me, before—they—took—my—sword!"

His voice broke and then with rising excitement he added:

"With that went everything! What have I to save, even if I do consent to a lie? It's gone, I tell you, my whole life's gone to smash! I am a disgrace to the service I would have died for! I have only one thing left—I have never yet told a lie, let me keep that at least, gentlemen!"

Robb's sane voice broke the tension.

"Fellowes, you know as well as I do that pleading is not a lie. It is a mere legal form, without which equity would soon perish from the earth.

PEACE AND THE VICES

Make them prove it, that is all. You shut out all evidence at once by pleading guilty."

Talty's eyes leaped from one face to another.

"You'll get your punishment all right, Kent (if that's what you feel the need of), on charge first; you're dead sure of that; now then, 'stand mute' on the other two, that's all we ask," he urged.

"Who will be judge-advocate?" the doctor suddenly demanded.

"Hopkins."

"Good! he's irritable, but you know he holds to the old-fashioned idea that a prosecuting attorney exists to bring out the truth, whatever it is!"

And so the two friends bent their wits toward building up the stricken officer's self-respect, and at the same time levelling the high altar of his personal, almost fanatic, integrity, which blocked the way of possible succor. Finally the doctor suggested:

"Fellowes, may I tell you honestly as an old friend and shipmate, what I'd like you to do? I knew a case very much like yours where it was done and done well, and saved the fellow's commission. Go into court without counsel, and read your own defence——"

UNDER ARREST

"I have no defence! Why do you and Talty torture me!" broke in Fellowes irritably, for the first time.

"One moment, please, my dear fellow. I was about to say that I'd like you to present only what's called the sentimental (that's not the word) human side. Just tell the simple truth in the simplest way. Your long fight—O you know what I mean—and throw yourself on the mercy of the Court."

"And to thunder with forms! I see the whole thing," broke in Jack excitedly.

"It's not in me to do such a thing, Jack. It's absolutely foreign to my whole nature—such as I have," said Fellowes bitterly.

"Will you let me do it for you?" came very quietly from Robb.

"The very man!" exclaimed Talty, springing to his feet.

"I don't know what to do! There is that same preliminary lie staring at me from every exit. Ah! don't think, either of you, that I lose sight, for one moment, of your endless kindness to me, now that I have fallen so low. If anything can redeem a poor devil it is friendship like yours!"

The others moved uneasily, trained shy of emo-

PEACE AND THE VICES

tional expression. But the ice about Fellowes' heart had melted at last and the words poured from his lips in a torrent:

"Oh, if some great orator could but translate into speech the hell that is within me to-day, the vice of drink would vanish from the earth! He could use the lesson of my life and welcome—I should not have lived in vain. The long, long years of fighting; the failures; the self-loathing; the struggle to my feet again each time; the high ideals; the low consummations; and the weariness, weariness of wasted effort! Trained for battle, and not even able to conquer myself! Craving with almost frenzy the big things in living, and not even making my—home—a happy one! God! to get this thing outside of myself and strangle it with my own hands!" he struck the wood-work of his narrow bunk with his fist, as if he had at last by the throat the vice that had been his undoing. The others sat with bowed heads, unwilling to look at the man in his agony, shrinking sensitively from each other's eyes. Fellowes turned and looked at them and understood and faltered out:

"I beg your pardon," then a rap on the door-frame startled them all.

UNDER ARREST

Talty drew the curtain, and the level voice of the messenger sounded grotesque, in their overwrought mood.

"This note for Lieutenant Fellowes just came off, sir. Any answer, sir?"

Jack handed it to his brother-in-law, and then conversed aside with the doctor in low tones.

It was Dora's daily letter to her husband, and his hungry eyes devoured the closely written pages bearing witness to her unquenchable love, her indomitable courage. At the end were these words:

"They tell me, dear, you will not consent to plead 'not guilty.' Of course I'm by no means a Portia (and yet when one thinks of it, she is only the queen of the literal, the common-sense view of things, isn't she?); but it seems to me that the world (social, political or commercial) would come to a standstill but for the small change of certain conventional fibs which come to have, as so many words do, a second meaning, which has wandered far away from the first one. The real fault lies more in the paucity of words in any language to express exact meaning, rather than in the use of them to apparently a false end. I bid my servants say 'out' at the door every day of my life, a round of formal calls is one long articulated

PEACE AND THE VICES

falsehood, if you must know, sir! I think, dear, you should yield to the advice of those about you. A more honorable set of men I do not believe exists. You all live quite apart from the world of barter, in an atmosphere almost solely one of striving after ideals—patriotism, courage, honor. Surely, dear heart, you can trust to the counsels of such as these! Please be guided by them for all our sakes, and God be with you to the end, my love.”

Scribbling a hasty reply at his desk, he dashed it into an envelope, wrote the address, gave it and a silver coin to the messenger, dragged the curtain once more across the pole with a loud rattle of the brass rings, turned abruptly to the doctor, and said:

“I will fight the case. I will do exactly what you bid me.”

CHAPTER X

MAMMY SEES THE "WHITE LIGHT"

" 'Tis an awkward thing to play with souls,
And matter enough to save one's own."

TWO days before Lieutenant Fellowes' trial was the middle day of the *Bon Matsuri* in Nagasaki. Differing little in spirit from All Souls' Day in Latin Europe (and in form, mainly that in the Western world the gift of flowers bore the testimony of faithfulness to their dead), the Feast of Lanterns in the older country places upon the graves the tribute of the source of all life-light; a far deeper symbolism.

Adele had received that morning invitations from her two doctors, Robb and D'Estrées, to go to the midnight launching of the "straw-boats" at Ohata, on the following evening (the third and final of the festival), when the souls of the departed return to their abode after the yearly visit ashore, to collect their meed of loyalty.

Although D'Estrées' note offered the greater

ease of his private launch, and a gay supper afterward to his little party of four others besides themselves, she accepted Robb's, baited only with the expressed hope that her sister would trust her to him, and the promise of a hired *sampan* and two tested *sendo*. He knew she was in no mood for gayety.

When Yamaguchi started off with Miss Talty's chit-book, containing her two replies, he naturally delivered the Italian's first, at the foot of the hill below "Ippon Matsu." After reading Miss Talty's "regret that a previous engagement would prevent," and seeing the Naval officer's name below his own in the tale-telling list of the chit-book, D'Estrées became suddenly inflamed with jealousy.

"About five minutes 'previous,' no more!" he muttered to himself, as he dug his distorted initials into the page opposite his name and tossed the book to his Japanese "boy."

It still lacked twenty minutes of the time to close his morning office-hours, but D'Estrées broke a hitherto inviolable rule and left the house at once, impatient of inaction, and tore up the Bund to the only shop in town which handled European stationery, and demanded the *dernier cri* in femi-

MAMMY SEES THE "WHITE LIGHT"

nine chit-books. After much cavil, he bought one of dark-blue leather lined with velvet of the same shade, a mere empty cover that told no tales on the fair—and generally perfidious—owner.

Too irritated to await the slower development of his small drama, the Italian went directly to "Ippon Matsu," asked for Miss Talty, and awaited her coming with an excitement which he now no longer could stem.

It was as if the passion had been awaiting that one spark of jealousy to burst into flame—and like most fires when once started, the end thereof of disaster cannot be safely predicted.

He strode up and down the room, into which Mammy had ushered him, pushing the chairs right and left out of his path; and now and then wiping his brow with a large handkerchief, from which a faint perfume advertised a nature given to much petting of its several senses.

His manner changed at once when Adele entered. He became elaborately courteous, cold, grave—only there burned in his black eyes a dangerous brilliancy.

"I have given to myself the pleasure, Mees Tality, to breeng you a very leetle present. A theeng you are much een the need of."

PEACE AND THE VICES

"Oh, how delightful! I do so love to be surprised, it's my favorite emotion," cried the girl seizing the package and pulling at the string with a child's impatience. When at last, stripped of its wrapper, she took the gift in her hand and examined it, she murmured:

"How dainty! But, please, what is it for? It hasn't any—true inwardness. It's only a cover, but of what? for what?"

"A cover—yes! Of what? Of the intricacies (have I the word?) of a woman's caprice, vanity, cruelty. *For* what? To spare perhaps a leetle pen to the hearts who cannort bot care for her."

Whether the man really meant it, whether he was merely carried along by the momentum of his artistic nature (forever a recreation to one of his temperament), Adele was at a loss to determine; but she was experienced enough to assume the latter to be the case, although his mood, his pale face, his sonorous voice, affected her strongly.

"Tell me instantly, Doctor D'Estrées, how this little thing produces such alarming effects?"

"Reduces, nort produces. I weel explen." She seated herself and he stood before her.

"I nottice when your cheet-book cam' to me an hour ago, Mees Tality, refusing to go weet me to-

MAMMY SEES THE "WHITE LIGHT"

morrow night, that you had become possessed of the old stupid kind—the man's cheet-book, een fact—open, frank, nems all plen and clear; no secrets to hide—a man's li-i-fe!"

Adele gave a gentle, little cough and drooped her eyes adorably, but he refused to be diverted.

"The ladies' book should nort be of that ingen-uousness. (Ugh! I li-i-ke nort that congested word of yours!) That which you hold ees the proper one, I beg you weel from now use no orther. No record there of the *affaires du cœur, en troika!* The note to say: 'yes,' beside the note to say: 'no,' to anorther. No! One at a time. Your coolie's pouch only carries the truth. Do you see the meaning, yes?"

Adele's flushed cheeks and conscious eyes betrayed her, although she vowed the mystery only grew with the explanation.

After a short silence, he went to her and took her hand, his own like ice and his face was greatly moved, his voice recording tremendous heart-beats as he said gently:

"I do nort want to care for you, my pretty child. No! nor ees my love precisely a blessing een any woman's li-i-fe. Oh, do I nort know myself? Bot——"

PEACE AND THE VICES

Mammy's soft, singing voice from the door broke in suddenly:

"Miss Dell, I hope you-all please 'scuse me, but Miss Dora she sent me ter find you; I reckon you'd bes' see her for one little minute, please miss."

The Italian fled to the window.

Even Mammy's notoriously unprincipled soul scarce deserved the fate to which he condemned it, during that moment when he stood there with clinched hands, raging at this interruption.

Adele, wondering, followed Mammy out of the room. Never had she taken such a liberty before, in fact had always stood a relentless guard over her young mistress' social consummations. Once safely out of hearing the negress turned swiftly and whispered:

"Please, missy, came inter yo' room, quick. I jes' 'bliged ter speak to yer." The girl obeyed in amazement. Once inside, Mammy closed the door and leaned against it with her full weight, facing into the room.

"Wha' fer you snap yo' eyes at me, Miss Dell? You know mighty well, yo' ole Mammy she jes' only live' ter keep you-all happy. She ain' got no life of her very own, honey. All right, all

MAMMY SEES THE "WHITE LIGHT"

right, chile, ain' I tryin' my bes' ter tell yer? Miss Dell, doan' yer give no 'fence toe dat deah I-talian doctor out in de other room! Doan' yer do it, honey! You jes' mine what dis ole nigger she say dis day! You be mighty kyarful what you say ter him. I was a-settin' over yonder mendin' Miss Julie's dress, an' suddenly de white light come ter me, miss! An' somethin' hit me spang in de haid, an' it come ter me cl'ar, like de sun out deah! *He's de onlies' pusson what has saw de cap'n when he wasn' hisself—de onlies' one!* An' dis heah co't-martial sets day arfter to-morrow, miss, yer hyar me? We doan' want any ob dat gent'man's hate jes' now, we doan'. Now you go on back toe de parlor, Miss Del, but you be sorf an' kitty-catty, an' smile, an' send him away chuck-full ob hopefulness."

"Does Miss Dora really want me?" asked Dell from the doorway.

"Well, I—I doan' reckon she's jes' sot 'bout it dis 'tick'lar second, miss," giggled the old woman.

Long ago Dell had learned that when the "white light" came to Mammy, there was only one wise thing to do—obey at any cost and wait a little. But for that, she would have at once put an end that afternoon to Doctor D'Estrées' aspira-

PEACE AND THE VICES

tions, whatever they were. As it was, she tried all her expedients one after another, for diverting the conversation into less personal channels: flattery of his intellectual egoism, banter, cajolery, musical preferences and prejudices—and through all he sat almost in silence, laughing slightly, and biding his time. Not until she arose, tremulous and pale, and said she feared she should have to return to Mrs. Fellowes, did he act, begging for but a few moments more. And she sat down weaponless and helpless before him. Walking excitedly up and down in front of her, he poured out rapidly with instinctive dramatic effect the story of his lonely life, the slow disintegration of ambition in the Orient, the revelation of her coming, the deep necessity of her remaining. It was too perfectly done to convince her of aught but his art and served but to salve her conscience. But his obviously vast experience, his terrible intuition, his dominating animalism, the very brilliancy and nimbleness of his brain left her appalled at her task and she began to tremble under his eyes. Seeing which, he broke into that curious unrelated laugh and walked away from her to get himself well in hand, that he might not alarm her by the one small glimpse she was about to be given

MAMMY SEES THE "WHITE LIGHT"

of the storm within him. Returning to her he dragged a chair near her, and again possessed himself of a little hand as cold as his own. He was now quite assured of the end by her palpitating silence, her evident embarrassment, her very pale, excited face and frightened, downcast eyes.

Never until that hour had Dell been touched by one single regret for her long career of conscienceless coquetry with men, successfully launched during her fifteenth year.

She felt as she sat there, her tongue tied by Mammy's tragically urgent warning—which her own judgment indorsed—that at last the punishment had come of which she had so often been warned by her half-laughing elders. If it had been anyone less volcanic than this inscrutable European, it would have been so simple! And then he spoke:

"Adelaïda, look up into my eyes. I love you, I do not dare to tell you how moch! I want you een my li-i-fe! Weel you come? As my wi-i-fe you shall be reech, more than you dream; we weel love, and laugh, and mek the music together, you and I. You have nort done one-half weet the voice that you could; you can play *la grâce* weet the hearts, you! Say bot the word I want and pent for me

PEACE AND THE VICES

to-morrow's sunrise! Adelaïda, weel you nort spic'? Now, at once! *Dio*, my leetle one, you are so cruel!"

Broken hearts rose Macbeth-like in Dell's memory and passed in review before her inward trembling vision. She moistened her parched lips and essayed to speak, trying to withdraw her hand, but his grasp was like iron, albeit he had the physician's soft, satin-skinned hand. Finally, almost in a whisper, came:

"I will answer you in forty-eight hours." Jack had said the Court would find a sentence after one session. Dell longed, but did not dare ask, for further respite from D'Estrées' inevitable anger.

The Italian was instantly on his feet, almost flinging back her hand.

"So! Eet was a game, after all. I am less to you than that man of wood out there on the American ship! You amuse yourself—ha! I thought as moch. I have the honor to bid you good-morning, Mees Tality."

"Doctor D'Estrées! please, one moment!" she cried. He must not go like that; once outside the house his animosity was assured; with a quick thought of Dora she held out her hand to her companion, who was again beside her, hat in hand.

MAMMY SEES THE "WHITE LIGHT"

Putting out one hand she laid it gently on his arm, which shook under the light touch, and then with her head on one side, her eyes coquetting with his, she pouted up at him:

"Just forty-eight hours? Surely when the big things in life come to us, one must have time to catch one's breath; to resign oneself if it be unhappiness, to taste—ah, Doctor! if it be happiness! That's right! I like your smile so much better than that black scowl, I am so afraid of you then! In the old days, a lady demanded as the price of her hand the head of a very unsociable dragon, or a gem from the brow of an Indian idol seven times seven locked within his gates. And yet—when I ask you for what? forty-eight hours, look at you! Chivalry is indeed gone from the earth if an Italian has it not!"

"Adorable child! Ah-h, do weel me what you weel! Eet ees yours—forty-eight hours, my soul, my weel, anytheeng, everytheeng! but you are mine, do you hear?"

He was smiling, yielding completely to her seductions, flexible in her hands—so she thought—for which reason she was totally unprepared when he suddenly gathered her into his arms and left the scar of his passionate kiss upon her very soul.

PEACE AND THE VICES

And when he released her, the iniquity of her enforced silence was borne in upon her on a great wave of shame.

He left the house at once; and she stood, her hands to her reeling head, and knew for the first time that she loved—Leigh Robb!

CHAPTER XI

THE FEAST OF LANTERNS

“ O how this spring of love resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day ! ”

DORA insisted that her sister should not deny herself the few quiet pleasures possible under the circumstances, and it seemed but to add to her burden if Adele isolated herself entirely. By this time Robb had so endeared himself to the little household through all those long hours of suspense, that a day was rare that did not bring to one of them some evidence of his unremitting thoughtfulness.

Even Dora now saw him freely and learned from him of Kent's welfare, greedily drinking from the cup of hope he held out to her in his strong quiet hands. She had never left the compound since the day she had arrived from Shanghai, shrinking from alien, curious eyes, now that her secret was common property. The shock had left her as nearly morbid as it was in her to become;

PEACE AND THE VICES

the strain was telling on her cumulatively day after day. Some slight peace seemed to come to her only when left alone with Julie and O Haru, the only persons she could be sure were not thinking forbidden things in her presence. They were gay and happy, and very busy in their own little round of living, and they alone rested her. So she sat all fair days, before and after the great heat of the day, in the summer-house; and there was little time for thought with Julie playing near, endlessly restless, imperious, insistent of notice. And so they left her, and Mammy watched from afar and knew the need of her was fast approaching.

Since the Italian's morning call, Adele had not had one happy thought. She saw very clearly all around her action of that day; and although she knew the climax had not been dreamed of by her, she felt none the less guilty, contaminated, humiliated by the premises which had led up to it. She had used her womanhood to gain an end—for others, to be sure, but that counted for little in her present mood. She had been false to herself, that was what mortified her. She felt intuitively that no woman would ever mean more to the Italian than a passing obsession, and her perfidy to him troubled her only in its reflex action. For the first

THE FEAST OF LANTERNS

time her relations with men, confessedly founded on vanity alone, seemed stripped of their decent frippery, and she saw them in a new light. But above all else was the sudden revelation of her love for Leigh Robb; which it now seemed to her she had forfeited by that moment of horror in the Italian's arms, which had ended the spring-time of her life.

Silent, sleepless, haunted, she wandered about in one of those tragic attacks of self-flagellation that modify the Chauvinism of youth.

She had written Robb withdrawing her acceptance of his invitation for the third night of the *Bon Matsuri*; but none of the excuses she gave seemed to him at all important, and he arrived at "Ippon Matsu" that evening determined to have his way, and in consequence having it.

At once he noticed the change in Adele's looks and manner, and noted the urgency with which she coaxed Dora to accompany them, in which case perhaps she might be brought to modify her decision. But her sister shrank at the word. How could they ask her to go down to the bay, to pass so near the silent ship on which was imprisoned her unhappy husband, whom she had not seen for ten days! She looked at her companions reproach-

PEACE AND THE VICES

fully with her great sad eyes, and went to her sleeping baby's crib and lifted her and held her close and sat rocking far into the night, and hope and peace came back to her.

When left alone with Adele, the doctor said:

"Mrs. Fellowes does not want either of us, we simply hurt her continually; and as for your headache, I prescribe a *sampan* for two! So get thee ready, fair maid, and come," and she did not even smile, but sat in silence, refusing his eyes.

Presently she arose and left the room, returning with a hat and light wrap, and he rejoiced, and they went their way, down through the dark streets of the foreign settlement to the Bund, where the awaiting *sampan* bore witness to the doctor's self-confidence.

Adele would have laughed a week ago, but now it seemed but further corroboration of her weakness of character and general unsoundness, and she stepped in and took her place among the officer's own cushions in the stern, in entire silence. And he wondered greatly and made further, and much more daring, resolutions.

It was a clear starlit night, perfect for the apotheosis of the Feast of Lanterns.

There were two boatmen, one standing behind

THE FEAST OF LANTERNS

them in the projecting stern, the other forward, and as they headed for the Ohata landing, far up the bay, they kept up a cadence of soft alternating respirations. The short sturdy figure in the bow (clad principally in tattooing) stood out against the projected light from their one lantern far up forward, turning its one bright eye toward the darkness ahead.

For some time neither Adele nor her companion spoke. Somehow her sense of humor was peculiarly absent now that she was with Robb, and that night she was depressed beyond all hiding.

The little harbor of Nagasaki, beautiful at all times, lends itself pre-eminently to the illumination of the *Bon Matsuri*. The cemeteries cover all the steep hill-sides that slope back from the old part of the native town, and each grave of the many thousands bore its little spark of light. The crest of scintillation reached the sky-line, making one great gold-studded curtain from almost the water's edge to the zenith.

"The sky itself is dragged down to earth to bear witness to the miracle of human fealty," murmured the doctor.

"Why not the reverse of that? Human fealty is so divine a thing that it has been lifted up to

PEACE AND THE VICES

heaven's rank. A love like Dora's?" her voice broke at the end.

"You are right. And it's an easy thing to be true to the dead, compared to the living. To place a little light on the grave where the offending heart had ceased to beat, is a small thing beside keeping alight a love for an offending heart that beats beside one," he replied gravely.

She looked at him sharply, wondering if there was purpose in his saying that, to-night, to her.

They were slowly nearing the Ohata end of the Bund, which was ablaze with light, packed with a jostling, chattering crowd. Robb spoke to the head *sendo*.

"The boats are not ready yet. I've told the man to row us directly across the bay to get a more distant view. By that time the boats for the ferrying of the souls will be ready to be launched."

"Oh, Doctor! I thought we were to get off here and see the people!" she cried, dreading the alternative isolation.

"Will you let me have my way—for once?" he laughed. "I think to come in contact with the human side of this one festival of spirit-land is a mistake."

She was helpless—water cuts off all exits but a final one.

THE FEAST OF LANTERNS

The doctor could only account for Dell's unwonted mood by the impending trial of her brother-in-law, and he sought to divert her, toning down his own joyful frame of mind to the level of hers. He tried one topic after another, and she only half listened, leaning forward from the low seat. Her hat was off, covertly harbored by Robb, who found ecstasy thereby.

Her dress was a white organdie with a tracery of pale green ferns, lost in the dim light. It was rounded out at the neck, with a fall of finest East Indian embroidery about it, and her throat rose from that base like a miniature marble column. The half-sleeves left bare her rounded forearms. Now and then a passing *sampan* flashed a light upon them, and a jewel on one of her fingers sparkled like a firefly. The boatmen were killing time, as they had been bidden, and rowed slowly, their unending whispered duet had become a part of the silence. Presently five bells in many voices rang out all over the harbor.

"*Uno bambino Napoli,*" suggested Adele, sweeping one arm out over the arc of the town at that moment upon their left.

Her use of Italian struck him as sinister, and he began observing her from a new footing.

PEACE AND THE VICES

Before he had reached the point of a light reply, a distant strain of music poured out its perfect witchery into the night. The American admiral was dining on the Russian flagship, and Moszkowski's "*Valse Romantique*" was being played as the last bottle of champagne helped to cement an expedient friendship between two great nations, still in their vigorous youth.

"Ah! that's what I've been wishing for and didn't know it—a waltz!" exclaimed Robb.

Adele sat erect suddenly, and put one hand nervously to her mouth.

"What is there in a waltz that tears at one's heart so! I feel as if I could not stand it—to-night," she cried.

"That's a fact. Next to a funeral march somehow it plays the worst havoc with one's nerves—if unhappy, and you seem——"

"Oh! the waltz is a hundred-fold worse, Doctor. The march detaches one at once from life, but a waltz like that—distant—coming and going—sweet as—sweet as——"

"Life is meant to be?" he softly suggested.

"Yes—exactly that—sweet as life was meant to be; and it stands for all the dear old foolishness of living that goes so soon, so soon."

THE FEAST OF LANTERNS

"A waltz certainly knows a lot about human nature," added he, glad that at last her thoughts were finding an outlet, however devious, from the source of her trouble.

"It says to me—now listen, Doctor, there, there that strain! It says: 'I am the spirit of pleasure. I was old when Athens was born. I cannot stay anywhere long. Make the most of your chance!' "

Her voice died away, the wind brought the music close to them, and stirred him strangely into a great impatience of the passing hours.

"It stands for sentiment only, not love, somehow. I don't know why," he continued, lest silence again should steal her from him. And she answered:

"I remember your saying that love is a tragedy. I think I begin to see what you mean."

A sharp pang went through Robb's heart, and instantly he associated seriously, for the first time, Adele and the Italian. He recalled the man's name above his own in her blabbing chit-book, and D'Estrées' agitated initials at the end of the line. This curious change in the girl, her laugh all gone, her aloofness from him, her bewildered feeling out into emotional spaces, her bearing lost for the first time in her life—all went

PEACE AND THE VICES

to indorse a dreaded theory. The music died away, six bells struck in a jangled sequence.

"So it has come to you, at last!" he finally ventured, his whole being in suspension for her answer.

"Yes, it has come," she said sadly, their minds at a tangent, and hers for once unwatchful of the action of his.

"May I ask a question, Miss Adele?" he inquired in a changed voice after another long pause.

She nodded, sure without looking that his eyes were upon her.

"Were you—did you—have you seen Doctor D'Estrées since I last wrote you?"

"Yes."

"I thought so;" she had never heard his voice with that hard ring in it, and it roused her out of her dream and she turned quickly to him:

"Oh, Doctor! if I could let it out to you! If I could only tell you what is in my heart to-night!"

"Surely after all these years you can count absolutely upon my—friendship—under any and all contingencies."

"I cannot, I cannot! You of all people, and that's what is hurting me so."

THE FEAST OF LANTERNS

He turned toward her more fully, and said almost roughly:

"Adele, you have got to tell me now! These hints are unworthy of you, insulting to me. If anything is in the way of your happiness, let mine be the task to remove it. I love you first, then myself. Be honest with me."

"I had nothing to tell you till yesterday, and now I can never tell you."

"Very well, that ends it," he said, angry at her persistent enigmas. He sat back and went over in his mind (doubly clear under the light of this unexpected fear) the possibilities of the situation. That the Italian had seen her after receiving a note from her was certain, and that in some way she felt bound to him, also that she was not happy in that bondage. Or was it the first mad revolt of every caged bird, later on, to feed contentedly from the hand that closed the door? Bent on a certain course of action upon which he finally decided, he remarked coldly:

"We shall miss the ceremony unless we go at once." He gave a quick order to the *sendo*, and the *sampan* lumbered forward clumsily.

She watched him with furtive eyes, aghast at his sudden reserve and coldness. She longed for

PEACE AND THE VICES

his love and sympathy, upon which she had so long unconsciously counted, but from which she felt forever estranged; looking at her turpitude with the morbid exaggeration of any pure young girl in her first shocked contact with the brutal side of things, from which the men who had hitherto loved her had been the first to screen her. Her desire for Robb's love battened upon the renunciation of it.

His loud cheerful tones broke in upon her reverie:

"Here we are, Miss Talty! There are the boats, over there on the right. See the food piled in little heaps? I believe the idea is that the souls of the dead after being ashore for three days, return to-night to their abode, and food is placed there for the mysterious voyage. You see in these overpopulated, old countries the struggle for food is tremendous. So it comes about that it represents the most precious of all gifts, and upon that is founded so many of the Japanese and Chinese festivals—or rather the form that tribute takes to both the living and dead in such celebrations."

The more he expounded the less interested she became. On he went relentlessly:

"In the old days these 'dead-boats' used to be piled also with the lights brought down from the

THE FEAST OF LANTERNS

graves, but there was a serious kerosene fire once in the harbor, and the authorities put a stop to it; and so much of the picturesqueness has gone. The boats used to float off, manned only by the disembodied, at the mercy of wind and tide, and many strange things happened supposed to be full of symbolic significance. Does it interest you at all? Or are you disappointed?"

She could not answer him, so deep was her resentment of his tone and manner.

"Are you disappointed?" he repeated, pretending to see nothing subjective in her grieved silence. She suddenly sank down upon the seat. Keeping his eyes out upon the little flotilla of boats, he went on talking about his few facts and many fancies regarding the *Matsuri* before them. He gave a whispered order to the *sendo* in the stern of the boat, who thereupon walked forward. Then Robb heard the soft sound of a woman weeping down beneath him in the darkness, but still he held himself erect—she should be disciplined—she should be forced to tell him all there was to tell before she slept that night! She was in some psychical tangle and needed him, and she should ask for his aid before seven bells.

PEACE AND THE VICES

Not until he began to whistle softly did she succumb.

"Oh, Doctor!" was all he caught, but less even than that piteous reproach would have brought him to his knees beside her.

"Yes, dear—tell me all, I feel sure I can help you."

She waited a moment clinging to his arm and fighting down her sobs that she might speak.

"I'm going to be perfectly frank and tell you something, Doctor Robb, and then I—I'll go out of your life forever."

"We'll see about that later—just tell me first, please, like a good little girl."

"You see, I could never have told you like this boldly, brazenly——"

"Quite so," he interjected.

"—if it was not for the impassable barrier between us."

"Naturally," he was quite at his ease now but so unprepared for her next words that from that hour he ceased to claim any but the slightest knowledge of feminine nature.

"I have discovered, Doctor, in a strange, strange way, that—Leigh! I know now, I'm sure of it! At last I know that I love—you!" There was a

THE FEAST OF LANTERNS

moment of confusion, the silence only broken by smothered ejaculations in a man's voice, roughened by deep feeling. Then her voice arose from it, sharp with excitement:

"Do not touch me! You misunderstand! I told you there was something forever between us—listen to me. Oh, let me go! You must know that but for that, and that I thought you fully understood it, I would have died rather than tell you such a thing!" She tried to rise, pushing him from her with a strange strength.

"And the barrier?" he panted. She was silent. His nimble mind darted right and left in search of enlightenment; but she had admitted her love, nothing else counted henceforth, people and circumstances should bend like reeds before his will.

To keep down his great exultation was now his task, as the *sampan* sped homeward, and the lights on the hills dropped one by one into the well of darkness. Only the lamps of the sky burned on steadfastly, far above the little fret of life below.

"If I were the flaccid hero of an analytical novel, Adele, I'd say with a tearful eye on the evening star: 'All is over! I accept my fate. The occultism of your silence parts us forever.' And

PEACE AND THE VICES

I'd sail away and you'd marry the other fellow. Not on your life! You've said the one important thing to-night and I'm here to stay!"

Her reply was that of an extremely injured person:

"It seems strange to me that when you used to be serious I always laughed, and now I am terribly in earnest you are suddenly very jocund! If you cannot take me seriously I shall not speak again."

"So long as I do take you, it shall be any old way you like, dear."

There is no insult like an ill-timed optimism, and for the first time in her life she felt resentful of mirth and humor, such miracles does love work!

"I bought something at the price of my—integrity!" she suddenly was goaded into saying.

"That's a very high price for anything I've seen in Nagasaki." Then he added quickly:

"Does that mean you are engaged to that—to the Italian?"

"No, no! I'd rather die!"

"Naturally, anybody would," and he burst into sudden loud ringing laughter, now sure of the evening's end.

She breathed quickly, deeply, and struck her

THE FEAST OF LANTERNS

hands together passionately, roused at last to a beautiful fury:

"Oh, you may laugh and joke when I tell you that my honor is smirched, that my heart is broken, and that just at the moment that I begin to love you, I must not! If you find all that funny, go on laughing—but take me home, take me home, at once! I know from this that you are a hard, cruel man, and I should have soon learned to hate you. It's just as well I've found it out in time. I am thankful!" He shook with inward laughter and said not a word, now sitting beside her, his hands together before him—waiting.

"You shall hear now, I'll spare you nothing! And then laugh if you can! He—he wants to marry me—he——"

"Can't blame him for that," his dry tone brought from her a sudden choked cry:

"He—he kissed me—odiously."

"Then it was against your will?" came quickly from Robb in quite another tone.

"Leigh!" was all she said, but it was all he needed. He comprehended in a flash of intuition that he had no higher wall to vault than the dear child's innocence of life's real values, in order to reach his heaven.

PEACE AND THE VICES

He waited a moment, as it were, putting off his shoes at the door of the holy temple; then very gently he placed his arms about her and drew her to him and whispered in her ear. After a fruitless effort she found she was absolutely helpless.

"My blessed one, do you suppose for one instant I'm going to let this mood of yours—any mood—settle the question of our happiness? Yes, dear, I know, I know—I do understand. And shall I tell you what it says to me, this little soul tragedy of yours? It shows me the spotless purity of your heart, the fine integrity of your womanhood, the cleanness of your very soul, my sweetheart. And I but honor you ten times the more for it, and feel ten times the less worthy of you." She was now crying softly against his broad breast, clinging like a tired child. He stroked her hair with the gentlest touch she had ever known, and had the instinct to offer no further caress.

"There, there, poor little girl! It's a sad, old, naughty world, isn't it? I said you'd come to me some day, do you remember? Hereafter count no words of mine empty, Mrs. Robb! Now, there's no use in your struggling like that—you are going to be my wife. Wicked as you undoubtedly are, I want you. It's a great relief to

THE FEAST OF LANTERNS

my mind to find that, after all, you are not perfect! Adele, must I wait till the end of this cruise? Must I?" She did not answer, but he pretended she did, and went on with a tenderness she had not dreamed his voice capable of:

"Well, if you say I must, I suppose I'll have to somehow. Oh, my darling, the joy, joy, joy, of this moment," he burst out suddenly. A broken word from her made him stoop, listening.

"No, Adele, not one more word about it to-night. You are a good, true, little woman underneath all your—deviltries—alas! no less a word expresses it. I want you to go home at peace and happy as you can be after flinging yourself away like this on a good-for-nothing, poverty-stricken Naval surgeon, whose support will assure you nothing but picturesque starvation to the end of your days. Come to think of it, it's the only downright unintelligent thing I ever knew you to do, Adele Talty! I confess, I'm a little disappointed in you."

At last the dear, sweet laugh he had been listening for rippled out and he knew that he had won.

The boatmen still panted out their ceaseless sibilation.

Then the American flagship struck seven bells

PEACE AND THE VICES

with Yankee smartness, the Russian followed with ponderous dignity, and all the others tumbled into line here and there over the bay, and sang their little songs of sleepless vigilance.

And then they reached the landing, and walked up the hill through the silent streets to "Ippon Matsu." She did not speak, but just clung to his arm and gave now and then a low happy laugh as he doctored her wounded soul. At the door he coaxed a little, and she yielded and put her arms up about his neck, and repeated the words he had dictated, and—then Mammy opened the door.

CHAPTER XII

THE COURT-MARTIAL CONVENES

“ Now let it work : Mischief, thou art afoot.”

AT eight o'clock the next morning the various men-of-war lying in the harbor gently asserted their several nationalities by a simultaneous slow hoisting of flags to the different staffs; as if a bed of sleeping tulips, awakened by the sun, had bloomed forth into many colors. The American, German and Russian bands on the flag-ships played their national airs, each its own first and then that of Japan, followed by that of all the ships-of-war present, according to the rank of the admirals. The result of which courteous interchange of peaceful amenities made for much musical strife, from which the Russian hymn rose triumphant by its very simplicity. During this ceremony, the men and officers of the American flag-ship stood at petrified attention, facing aft, ending with a jaunty salute when the great fair-weather ensign reached the top of the flagstaff.

PEACE AND THE VICES

About twenty minutes before ten o'clock a boat from each of the other two American ships put off and headed for their flagship, and their freight of officers met and was discharged on the starboard side. They greeted one another with jocular familiarity as they ran up the gangway to the deck, notwithstanding the fact that their uniforms of frock-coat and side-arms indicated an occasion of more than ordinary ceremony.

As they stepped up on the quarter-deck the shrill pipe of the boatswain's whistle, the lining up of the "side-boys" standing at salute, further denoted the status of the visitors, now frozen into stiff observance.

A few moments before ten o'clock they, with others, were chatting together standing about a long table in the captain's cabin. There were two smaller tables, at one of which was a stenographer; beside this, to the right, was placed a single chair; the other table had two empty chairs behind it. A young lieutenant of Marines acted as provost marshal at the door.

As the quick ringing of four bells ceased, Captain Penny rapped on the table, saying:

"The Court will come to order!"

All conversation stopped instantly, and out over

THE COURT-MARTIAL CONVENES

the harbor rang the sharp report of one of the flagship's six-pounders, and the Union Jack was "broken" from the signal-yard, telling all the world that Kent Fellowes' supreme hour of humiliation had come.

Captain Penny, the president of the Court, a small man with a large, slow, dignified bearing, seated himself at the upper end of the long table, and the other members ranged themselves down either side, according to rank. At the foot was the judge-advocate, Lieutenant Commander Hopkins, prosecuting officer, a tall, very thin man with a nervous manner.

In a level, official tone the president said:

"The judge-advocate will proceed."

Hopkins arose and in his long-skilled hands the many details of the organization of a military tribunal went speedily forward. Then an order was given to the provost marshal and a pause followed.

The door finally opened and Lieutenant Fellowes, followed by his counsel, Dr. Robb (both in undress uniform), slowly entered and walked to their assigned table to the right of, and somewhat behind, the judge-advocate.

Fellowes' pale, almost emaciated, face and the

PEACE AND THE VICES

unutterable anguish in his eyes, from which youth seemed forever fled, sent a thrill around the table and the men shifted their positions uneasily.

After being himself sworn by the president, the judge advocate took the Bible from the table, and holding it at arm's-length, the members of the Court gathered in a circle about him, each placing a hand on the outstretched book. Then the oath was administered to them all by the judge-advocate, who repeated in a solemn voice:

“‘You do swear that you will truly try, without prejudice or partiality, the case now depending, according to the evidence which shall come before the Court, the Rules for the Government of the Navy, and your own conscience; that you will not, by any means, divulge or disclose the sentence of the Court until it shall have been approved by the proper authority; and that you will not, at any time, divulge or disclose the vote or opinion of any particular member of the Court, unless required so to do before a court of justice in due course of law?’ ”

“I do,” each voice gravely replied, with that marked variety in pitch that bears witness to the miracle of nature's taste for multiformity in all created things.

THE COURT-MARTIAL CONVENES

The Court in secret session having pronounced the charges "correct and in due form," the judge-advocate turned to the accused officer, and said:

"Are you ready for the trial?"

"I am," came the low reply.

"Please stand up."

Fellowes arose so slowly from his chair that for an instant they thought him physically overcome, and Robb leaned quickly forward and spoke to him in a low tone.

The judge-advocate then read in an impressive voice the endless repetitions in the charges and specifications. Fellowes stood motionless until the end, only putting out one hand involuntarily when the arraignment began, and the sound of his own name nailed down upon him the forerunning charges.

Hopkins paused a moment to give the accused a chance to recover himself, and then proceeded:

"Lieutenant Kent Fellowes, United States Navy, you have heard the charges and the specifications of charges preferred against you, how say you to the first charge—guilty or not guilty?"

Again there was that curious hesitation as of a man forced to do something against his own ap-

PEACE AND THE VICES

probation, then plainly yielding to a low-toned remonstrance from his counsel, Fellowes answered faintly:

"Not guilty."

The judge-advocate's high disquieting voice went through each charge and specification, ending each time with the cadenced query:

"How say you, guilty or not guilty?"

And each time with ever-rising protest, Fellowes looked into his counsel's dominating eyes and answered:

"Not guilty."

When this was over, Hopkins, after a sharp scrutiny of Kent's face, and reading there a more than ordinary strain under arraignment, asked for a recess.

The Court relaxed at once into smiles and banter. Such of the members as were old friends or quondam shipmates of the accused, went up to him, held out their hands warmly, talking of old cruises on other stations, or inquiring for his wife, expressing a hope soon to pay their respects. A casual on-looker dropping in would have had some difficulty, for the moment, in pointing out the man, in that small assembly, who was on trial for his commission.

THE COURT-MARTIAL CONVENES

Again Captain Penny's deep bass rumbled out:

"The Court will come to order," and once more the room became a scene of military solemnity unmatched in Naval life.

The first witness for the government was the executive officer of the "Boston," who, sitting in the lone chair to the right of the now busy stenographer, testified that he had on August first, at twenty minutes past one o'clock, given Lieutenant Fellowes permission to go ashore and remain till quarters on August second.

He was followed by the officer of the deck, who saw him go over the side. The third witness was Lieutenant Nugent, who had the deck when Kent returned to the ship.

Every man in the room felt a throb of emotion at Nugent's really very unimportant testimony, such was his evident reluctance and deep pain at being compelled by his oath to add so much as a straw to his old friend's disgrace. He sat in the witness' chair, his very ruddy face bowed, his eyes on the carpet, the picture of helpless guilt, expecting no mercy, asking for none. When his brief rôle was over, he turned and fled with so precipitate a clatter, that one of those smiles rooted in tears ran around the long table.

PEACE AND THE VICES

The judge-advocate then exhibited the "Boston's" log of August second, wherein was entered Fellowes' absence without leave; and in the entry of each four hours of watch through all those five days, in relentless repetition, appeared the same statement: "Lieutenant Fellowes absent without leave."

As each witness finished his direct testimony, Doctor Robb arose and said:

"I do not wish to cross-examine the witness."

At this point it was evident that the prosecution was about to play its trump card. The president relaxed nothing of his ponderous dignity, but the great *ennui* in his face quickened with interest, and he leaned forward against his folded hands laid on the table.

Hopkins' tense face remasked itself with an added decision. He drummed on the table nervously and looked at his watch with an irrelevant scowl; then bringing his hand down sharply on the bell beside him, he said to the provost marshal, who instantly appeared:

"Call Doctor D'Estrées."

Fellowes' eyes turned and clung to his counsel's with almost hypnotic intensity. Leaning forward he whispered: "As he has consented to testify I

am lost! I lied for nothing!" Into Robb's mind was coming a slow illumination of many things, with Adele conspicuous and in high light, and he answered: "Courage! He's of the genus venal—that man—unless I'm all astray!" Kent stared with no comprehension in his strained eyes.

The door opened and every eye in the courtroom turned toward it, as D'Estrées entered swiftly and then stood with his heels together, bowing. Coming forward with his usual rapid movements, he once more paused nearer the tribunal, bowing low to Captain Penny, whose rank his quick eye properly estimated, if his tongue purposely overstated:

"Admiral—gentlemen!"

They automatically acknowledged his effective greeting, grateful for this touch of drama entering into the midst of dry conventions.

D'Estrées was immaculate in white flannel with a red carnation in his button-hole; a small black loose tie at the throat, his broad *cummerbund* of folds of black silk taking the place of a waistcoat according to Far Eastern canons.

Tucking his thumbs into his sash he waited, looking about smiling, his unnaturally brilliant eyes taking inventory of a scene very much to his taste;

PEACE AND THE VICES

the very apotheosis of prosperous complacency and immense physical and mental vitality.

Robb felt every muscle in his body tingle as he looked at him—remembering—and one of those strong primitive instincts, familiar to every healthy man, swept over him: a longing for the Italian's sole society, space, air, and no favor.

The whole Court was now roused out of its lethargy, responsive to the magnetism of the Italian who was as aware of the effect he produced as he was of everything else once within his corrosive vision.

The judge advocate's voice broke the silence, looking over the resplendent witness' head in proof of entire disaffection.

"The president of the Court, Captain Penny, will administer the oath, Doctor D'Estrées."

The witness ran his keen eyes about the room, then one hand went to his Indian sash and he briskly pulled therefrom a large paper, which he unfolded with a slap of the other hand, and with a step backward from the table he addressed the president, colloquially, volubly, the degree of his accent varying with his excitement:

"I have brought weet me thees summons, I presume you call eet, and I would much li-i-ke the

THE COURT-MARTIAL CONVENES

honor to retain eet, both for the very great beauty of the coat-of-arms of your most esteemed country, and al-so as a memento of thees honorable occasion. I have the pair-measion, yes?" Ignoring the cross-fire of glaring glances levelled at him from the outraged president and extremely nettled judge advocate, the paper was again folded and restored to its snug place against his rotund form. The eyes of the less responsible members of the Court gleamed with expectation.

Fellowes leaned forward, his elbow on his knee, his hand supporting his head. This introduction of the burlesque was torture to him beyond all bearing.

When the president arose, determined to put an effectual end to this buffoonery, and held the Bible out to D'Estrées, the latter's flexible hand went up in one of those complex gestures of Latin negation, and he cried:

"Oh, no! I take no oath. Eet ees very far from my weesh to ex-pose myself to the unknown terrors of American law. No, no, no—not that! Eef however there be some questions the honorable Court——"

A sharp rap brought the harangue to a close and the Court to much-needed order.

PEACE AND THE VICES

The judge advocate's voice went through them like a jagged knife, after the indescribable mellow-ness of the Italian's.

"I call the witness to order! You are here to answer questions. Your replies are worthless unless you are previously sworn, sir."

"Ees eet so? Par-don, I regret I cannot breeng myself to the point of agreement. I am here, sir, because I choose to come, no more, no less! You have no jurisdiction over me. I am an Italian subject. We are weethin treaty leemits of the Empire of Japan, are we nort, gentlemen?"

"This is American soil I'll have you understand, sir, as long as that flag is above us!" the judge advocate made the mistake of saying. The shrug that D'Estrées gave was of no top-soil growth, but was deeply rooted in generations of the most dramatic people on earth.

"Again I mos' ask the pardon of the honorable Court. The soil under these two feet—" a quick stamp left no doubt as to his meaning—"ees Italian, here afloat, there ashore, always Italian! You can compel me to do northing I do nort weesh to do. I do nort weesh to take your oath—so—I do nort take eet! Am I plen? But as I have said already, sir, eef——"

THE COURT-MARTIAL CONVENES

The president rapped, an intermission followed during which he and the judge advocate consulted apart. D'Estrées started toward Fellowes smiling and with extended hands, but experienced a check by the prompt interposition of the provost marshal. Apparently an informal court, within its seemingly flexible lines, there lay laws of iron; there must be no intercourse between a witness and the accused.

Robb walked away and stood with his back turned to the room, looking at a large photograph of the flag-ship taken as her colors were raised on her first commission. With this before his eyes, one must dive under the surface to discover why he muttered to himself:

"He is bought to the soul! He is working for a reward; and that reward is Adele!"

Again the court-room came to order, and the judge advocate turned once more to the imperturbable witness and said sternly:

"Doctor D'Estrées, some days ago in your own office you told Captain Pehoe of the "Boston" that you would testify on charge second and specification in the case of Lieutenant Fellowes, you repeated the same thing to me day before yesterday. What is the meaning of this sudden change of at-

PEACE AND THE VICES

titude toward this Court?" Robb's heart thumped violently and the blood rushed to his face during the slight pause which followed. Since his short talk with Captain Penny during the intermission, the judge advocate's voice and manner were somewhat moderated. In recognition of which, the witness replied in his friendliest tone:

"Every word you have said, sir, ees true, exactly as you have stated. I deespute nothning, but the question of the oath was nort discossed between us, and of course all thees meelitary procedure ees new to me. But I have an uncontrollable disgost for an oath. Eet ees qui-i-te weetout value, sir. A man of honor does nort need eet, a man of no honor does nort respect eet. My testimony een thees case ees at your disposal, but my pride forbids the oath, of which I am surprised to find you make so moch."

Captain Penny's rough bass intervned before the judge advocate's obvious irascibility found vent:

"Doctor D'Estrées, you have, as I understand it, come here of your own free will, in obedience to summons legally issued by the judge advocate of this Court, and now you refuse to testify."

THE COURT-MARTIAL CONVENES

The Latin pantomimed fury finally controlled before he replied:

"Your excellency, I do nort refuse to testify. I am here for that purpose alone. I have made myself plen, I theenk, on that point; but I am a very busy man, matters of some moment await me now—I must ask for more speed, eef you please. I cannort repeat again and again the sem theeng."

"The court will be cleared!" thundered out Captain Penny, "and Doctor D'Estrées will oblige the Court by awaiting its decision."

The obstinate witness unconcernedly bowed with something very like triumph in his eyes.

Everyone left the court-room except the seven members, the doors were closed by the provost marshal and a sentry was placed over them.

As Fellowes and Robb left the room, the latter said with undisguised exultation:

"Old fellow, your commission is as safe as a church!"

"I do not understand it, I do not understand it!" repeated Kent in dull wonder.

The buzz of conversation outside was soon interrupted by the muffled sound of a bell in the court-room, and the marshal announced:

PEACE AND THE VICES

"The Court is open." They filed in, and as soon as it was quiet the president said:

"The Court decides that Doctor Teodoro D'Estrées is not within its jurisdiction, and directs that he be discharged."

As he said the last word Admiral Titterington's orderly appeared at the door and addressed the judge advocate:

"Captain Pehoe's compliments, sir, and will Doctor D'Estrées please step into the admiral's cabin before he leaves the ship?"

"Doctor D'Estrées, you heard the message. Will you please see Captain Pehoe before you leave the ship?" repeated Hopkins, putting as much dispraise into his tone as he well could in so commonplace a sentence.

"Weet moch pleasure. Your excellency, gentlemen, I have the honor to bid you good-morning."

The broad back of the recalcitrant witness had scarcely disappeared, when Hopkins arose and said rapidly:

"May it please the Court, I am not ready to proceed; and I would ask the Court to adjourn until to-morrow morning."

"The Court is adjourned until ten to-morrow

THE COURT-MARTIAL CONVENES

morning. The uniform will be service-dress, white."

Fellowes left the cabin and ship at once, returning directly to his ship, the provost marshal beside him; and in half an hour every man in the squadron had heard some distorted story of the morning, which grew with each repetition, until between-decks on the "Boston," "old Dennis," the best gun-captain in the fleet (and as sober as he ever was except at target practice) swore to another jacky that the Italian was at that moment in irons on the flag-ship for insubordination to the admiral; ending with:

"And it's thim dudes loike the prisent commander-in-chief that's holy terrors whin they do be started, moind that, me lad! And it's the Italian has me respectful sympathy."

Which was so far from the facts, that at that very moment D'Estrées, flushed and exulting, was walking down the deck of the flag-ship laughing to himself. Returning the salute of the officer of the deck, he ran lightly down the gangway and got into his own launch, waiting below. As it puffed its way across the bay, he slapped his knees with both hands and laughed aloud, muttering in Italian, safe in his isolation:

PEACE AND THE VICES

"*Dio mio*, but it has been a great morning! They can do nothing, absolutely nothing. They threaten, they cajole, they rage at me—and I? I laugh in their pale faces. The men of this race I hate, but the women—*esto perpetua!*" The doctor's eyes flew up the green hills to "Ippon Matsu," in smiling tribute, and then he added: "The little Adelaïda, she will thank me—how can I wait? Oh, but you always had a good head, Teodoro!"

CHAPTER XIII

A TEN O'CLOCK GUN

"Give sorrow words."

UNDER the shadow of "Ippon Matsu" they had all united in the attempt to keep Dora in ignorance of much that was going on down in the harbor below, sparing her pride even to the straining of the truth. But a letter had reached her the day before the Court met, from Imogen, containing these words:

"You poor thing! We all feel so sorry for you over here. Yesterday Mrs. Titterington said she could not imagine anything more awful than for you to hear that gun every morning at ten o'clock when your husband's character and habits are turned wrongside out before that Court; and the tears came to her queer-looking eyes as she spoke. I thought you'd like to hear of her sympathy.

"As I get all my news from others nowadays, I'll add that Mrs. Santley (she's got the homomania bad, I can tell you!), well, she read a letter from

PEACE AND THE VICES

the chief, in which he said your husband looked like death itself. Of course I'm awfully sorry for you, but what can he expect? I'd go to you tomorrow if your brother had not been acting so very queerly of late. If he thinks I'm to be pacified by a string of cheap jokes every mail, he's all out!

"How does Julie stand the heat? I should not think you'd dare keep her there all summer, nobody does, you know."

She showed this tactful letter to no one, but the effect of it upon her was apparent. She no longer found solace on the knee-high levels of her little daughter's busy life. She wandered about restlessly day and night, eating nothing unless forced to it by insistent Mammy.

Joy, happily for the world, expands; suffering, also happily for the world, contracts. Isolated by her agony, which had become incommunicable from long habit, they could only help her by keeping aloof. To hide her anguish from the household was now beyond her power, and in fact they wisely encouraged the eccentricity of all supreme emotion, rather than its repression.

When the morning came on which the Court met, it was a very pale rigid little Dora whose

A TEN O'CLOCK GUN

distended pitiful eyes continually wandered to the clock, as the hands neared the hour of ten. Adele noticed this in amazement, as they had counted upon her ignorance of official matters to be kept in doubt of both the hour, and the custom of firing that single gun at the moment that the Court convened. They had taken every precaution to leave her uncertain of this, and other facts connected with the trial of her husband. After a hasty consultation with Mammy, who instantly spotted the source of information, they tried to get Dora away from the house and the sound of that terrible signal—but without success.

They now hung over her doubly alarmed and helpless, and also furtively watched the little travelling clock on the mantel in her room. As the hour drew near, Mammy, chattering with unnatural loudness, bustled and banged around, dragging about all the furniture in the room, declaring she had lost her thimble, and knew in her heart that Haru had stolen it. But before she had the sly thing arrested and searched, she supposed she had better look about to be on the safe side—not that she had the faintest idea of finding it elsewhere than in the *amah's kori*.

Through all of this trumped-up ferment, Dora

PEACE AND THE VICES

stood unconscious of everyone in the open window that looked down on the bay, her hands shading her eyes from the hot sun which streamed in upon her small rigid figure in its loose white wrapper. Adele and the negress exchanged anxious glances, and the latter fell violently upon the wardrobe, dragging out the large drawer beneath, and just as the short hand reached the hour of ten, Mammy and her burden fell heavily to the floor and loud lamentations filled the house. But there was no escaping the significance of that single sharp report from the harbor, and Mammy arose from the floor her eyes full of disappointed tears and she and Adele stood paralyzed, waiting behind the stricken wife. Dora remained perfectly motionless after the first automatic start at the sound. Then to her sister's horror she began to laugh, at first very softly, whispering incessantly to herself:

"That was a good shot! It ought to be a good shot. They've been aiming straight at your heart for weeks and weeks and they waited till mine got exactly in line—that's why they were so long, dear. I knew that's what they were waiting for, and I stood in the window and wouldn't let Mammy pull down the *sudare*. I wanted it to be over. I'm

A TEN O'CLOCK GUN

so tired, I'm so tired! and you are so tired, my poor darling. Yes, I know—maybe we can sleep a little now that the gun hit us both in the middle of our hearts—straight in the middle, and we will not feel anything ever any more, ever any more, amen, amen."

Convulsed with weeping, Adele clung to Mammy and whispered:

"Can't we do something? I am afraid, O Mammy, I am afraid her mind has gone!"

"Pore little missy, her hour is come shore 'nuff please de Lord! You go on out, Miss Dell, leave her ter me, I'se got my 'structions from Doctor Robb, don't you go and get scared. She's kyarin' on fo' all de worl' de way he said he reckoned she would. Go on out an' don't 'fusticate me, honey!" The old woman's eyes never left Mrs. Fellowes' tense figure, still standing raving, seeing nothing but the phantasms of her own overwrought mind. Leaving the room for a moment, the negress returned carrying a glass half full of steaming hot milk. She went to the wash-stand and dropped into the milk a white powder which she took from her pocket. Dora's voice still went on pouring out now in loud disjointed sentences the long hidden misery of her overflowing heart, and

PEACE AND THE VICES

she did not seem aware of the servant's presence until Mammy took quiet hold of her arm and stroked it very gently and at the same time with a firm sure touch. Dora lowered her uplifted eyes slowly, and turned them with evident difficulty until they took in the faithful old black face, which she had known the longest of any living.

"Why, Mammy!" she murmured in slow amazement, her voice pitched in a strident treble instead of her usual deep contralto.

"Yes'm, it's your ole Mammy Lina, all right 'nuff! An' I'se got a monst'ous nice piece of news, missy. De cap'n's coming home ter dinner day arfter to-morrow!"

"Please say that again, I can't hear, you talk so fast. Please don't talk so fast," cried Dora with strong irritation, and brows knitted in her effort to comprehend.

Very slowly, Mammy went several times over what she had said, her reward being a vacant pitiful smile on the young wife's face, now flushed and twitching.

"Now, 'open de mouf an' shut de eyes, an' I'll give yer somethin' ter make yer—purty.' One, two, three, jes' see how quick yer can swaller dis heah little bit er milk. Deah she goes! Now, little

A TEN O'CLOCK GUN

missy, gwine look mighty purty when Marster Cap'n he comes home."

"Will it really make me pretty, Mammy?" Dora asked in a pleased way that went to her old nurse's heart.

"Deed'n 'twill, Miss Dora. An' yer mus' put on dat long white dress, fussed up wid de Val'-cinn'es lace, co'se dat's de cap'n's favoritest of all."

"And the pink sash?" queried Dora, as the other slowly drew her away from the window.

"Of co'se de pink sash, Miss Dora, an' a pink rose fo' de hair. My lan'! but you'll be sweet 'nuff ter eat."

"I want to see the sash," said Dora. But after it was placed in her hand, the cessation of Mammy's touch withdrawn for the moment, precipitated another attack of frenzy and the old nurse had it all to do over again; from the gentle stroking to the coaxing words:

"Why, chile, deah's y'ars and y'ars ob de sunnies', brightes', sorter weather 'haid you-all; but yer mus'n get down-sick, an' look like nuffin' but a scarecrow in a co'npatch." As the woman prattled on, her familiar voice again brought peace, if not entire understanding, to Dora whom she led

PEACE AND THE VICES

slowly toward the bed, her arm around her now relaxed figure. Talking all the time in a comforting croon, Mammy sat down on the edge of the bed beside her young mistress and softly drew the hair-pins out of the head now drooping forward against her. Once more Dora started wildly to her feet, hearing in fancy again that fatal gun from the flag-ship. But Mammy's patience was at length rewarded, softer and softer her voice grew and then ceased. A long piteous sigh came from the now recumbent form on the bed and Dora slept, the pink sash still in her grasp. After watching her a long time, nothing but her great black eyes moving, Mammy arose and gently drew down the shades and left the room as softly as a snake.

Dell was waiting outside and to her the old woman proudly babbled:

"She's ap' ter sleep 'bout fo'—five hours, but p'raps havin' conniptions now an' then, an' we-all mus' stay near an' watch-out. He tole me larst week dis heah boraxisym mighty like ter happen ter Miss Dora. Who? Why, dat deah Doctor Robb, co'se! He's sutney some sorter conjureman, ain' no two 'pinions 'bout dat, Miss Dell! Bes' not have too much ter do wid dat sorter gent'man, dat's my 'vice, miss! He done give me dat sleepin'

A TEN O'CLOCK GUN

po'tion ter use at my own digression, dat's what he said, and dat's how-come I knows what ter do fo' de pore chile."

"I think he might have trusted me," fumed Dell from a jealous heart.

"Now, Miss Dell, you know mighty well you ain't got a grain ob real sense, 'pared wid dat ole nigger, S. Car'lina!" And Adele shook her finger at her and smiled for the first time that day. But it again fled when the other added:

"But, Miss Dell, what's buzzin' 'round inside my haid, like ole Mister Bumblebee inside a win-der on a hot day, is dis heah: s'pose dat ole gun goin' froo de pore chile's heart to-morrow, an' to-morrow, an' to-morrow! I tell yer, miss, right now: if dat co't down yonder sets on de cap'n fo' a whole livin' week, Miss Dora she's never no mo' goin' ter be de same again. She jes' nat'ully can' stand it nohow."

Kent received no letter from his wife the first day of his trial, and they did not dare tell him why.

The drug Dora had twice been given left her the next morning nerveless and obedient to the will of others, and by nine o'clock they got her out of the house, and they took jinrikishas and went far

PEACE AND THE VICES

into the native town where the sound of a gun of so small a calibre could not be heard. At the flower-market Dell and Mammy went through the usual chaffering over prices raised at their approach. Dora sat veiled and motionless, Julie beside her, in her jinrikisha. Her glance wandered about at the child's command, and then her head would suddenly droop and her eyes close as the sleeping draught reasserted itself. When the dreaded hour had passed unnoticed by Dora they returned to "Curio Street," where of late the significant addition of Russian to the native and English signs over the shops bore witness to the slow coming of "the great glacier"; the first small harmless detritus of a terminal moraine, little suggestive of the huge, silent, relentless, on-coming forces back of it, to be stopped only at the sea's edge—if then.

Old Sato had sent word to Adele the week before, that he had returned from his quarterly search through the provinces for treasures coveted by "globe-trotters," who were happily ignorant of a sharp crescendo of prices, once they were under the shrewd old merchant's slender fingers.

Dora again sat outside watching the swarming light-hearted children about them, and so she was

A TEN O'CLOCK GUN

alone when Ensign Sault passed by, saw her, started, blushed, tried to retreat—and altogether produced such an effect of lonely boyishness that Dora's gentle heart was touched. She raised her veil and spoke to him, holding out her hand, the air having somewhat cleared her head and calmed her.

"All by yourself, Mr. Sault? Isn't it rather forlorn, shopping alone? I wonder if we could not help you?"

He could not speak at first and tears sprang to his eyes as he saw the shocking change in her sweet face, long known to him in Washington—remembering how he had recently sought to injure her.

Again she misread his trouble and again the soft motherly voice burned into his ears like hot irons. Mammy saw it all from inside the shadowy shop and muttered savage anathemas.

Finally Sault stammered out:

"You are very kind to care, Mrs. Fellowes: Yes, it is lonely sometimes. The fellows like things I don't care for, and—and there isn't much else but shopping."

"I understand. Dell must take you in hand. I'm sure you get frightfully cheated. Come home to tiffin with us, will you?" she wondered to hear

PEACE AND THE VICES

herself saying, but her heart yearned over all the suffering and loneliness in the world, and he was such a boy with such an earnest, clean face.

He would rather have been flayed alive than broken bread with this one woman on this one day, and he confusedly offered the easy excuse of an officer attached to a ship. She made the baby give him a white aster for his button-hole and shake hands with him; and he went on his way shaken to his soul's centre, having learned his first lesson in the perfect breeding of kindness; and something of Dora's own distress was lifted from her, so calculably exact is the ethical tonic of a gentle word, both to the hearer and to the speaker.

CHAPTER XIV

SECOND DAY OF THE COURT-MARTIAL

“Betrayed by peace.”

DURING the interval allowed him by the Court, the judge advocate had been using every effort to justify his captain's action in Fellowes' case, which had counted so securely upon the Italian's evidence.

Once again Hopkins had run down all the old scents and again found them stale, in his search for fresh evidence to produce in the second day's session of the Court. Talty had stayed on board continuously from the night that Lieutenant Fellowes had gone ashore, till his return five days later. Ensign Sault, known to have worked hard the first few days pursuant to his rather confused conception of his duty and self-advancement in his captain's eyes, had failed altogether in his youthful coup, about the details of which he was strangely reticent. Ashore there were only Fel-

PEACE AND THE VICES

lowes' own family, and several natives to whom a Christian oath carried less than no weight—and all of these were debarred as witnesses.

The morning of the reconvening of the Court, Hopkins returned to the "Boston" for breakfast, feeling himself—not for the first time—a victim to one of those powerful, but altogether formless, psychic energies having a rather varied nomenclature but resolving itself into the force of circumstances—plus the sinuosities of a certain Latin conscience.

None knew better than Hopkins, in his long career as a judge advocate, that in order to shield a thing loved perfectly honorable men still resort to the feint of the trailing broken wing of the mother partridge.

This strongly cemented wall of silent protection surrounded the accused, and the judge advocate knew that he was beaten. He also knew that two things really had saved Fellowes' commission: the mysterious defection of D'Estrées, and Fellowes' own fine character; which is in the end the one unfailing shield, beaten out by a man in the daily forge.

And yet, thought Hopkins, with a quizzical smile, the moral standard of these same men de-

SECOND DAY OF THE COURT-MARTIAL

feating him was high because of the very thing that he, as judge advocate, stood for.

Yes, the case was lost except on the first charge; and Hopkins' manner was relaxed and purely perfunctory when the Court met and was called to order, at ten o'clock.

Rising he said abruptly:

"May the Court please, I regret to say that I have no further witnesses and must close the prosecution." Adding a word to the stenographer, he sat down.

All his interest in the case had evaporated, his keen professional relish for a legal "kill" had melted once more into a pleasant old friendship.

Whatever acrimony remained was entirely concentrated upon D'Estrées and his buffoonery, which was not all buffoonery, as Hopkins had been quite as quick to recognize as Robb, and quite without the latter's premises.

There was a pause after Hopkins' last words, and then he turned to Robb:

"I believe you have no witnesses, Doctor?"

"No, none; but I should like to say a few words."

With eyes and voice expressive of an infinite

PEACE AND THE VICES

boredom, the judge advocate announced to the Court:

"The counsel for the accused has no witnesses and is ready to close the case. Proceed, sir."

Robb arose and stood an instant, insisting on the close attention that absolute silence, if broken at the right instant, alone best imposes.

When he spoke it was in that entirely rational tone that breeds less antagonism in the masculine mind than any other. He had no notes and resorted to no gestures, one hand was straight down at his side, two fingers of the other were tucked into his tightly buttoned white duck blouse.

"I had at no time intended to do more than invite the Court's attention to the human side of this case, and the surprising fact that the judge advocate has been unable to produce a single witness to support the second and third charges doubly relieves me of any necessity of even touching upon the legal aspect, supposed to exist before the judge advocate closed for the prosecution. The tap-roots of the law—or rather its enforcement—are embedded in evidence, otherwise as the gentlemen of the Court have just seen for themselves—the er—fruitage may, without euphemy, be termed, I think, meagre. The prosecution seems to have acted in

SECOND DAY OF THE COURT-MARTIAL

this matter either too hastily, or not quite hastily enough—I will leave it to you to determine.”

A smile ran around the table, which effect was, in accordance with an old aphorism of the counsel's: that laughter is the trumpet call to all other salutary emotions.

Fellowes sat as before, turned sidewise in his chair, his head leaning on his hand, his eyes on the floor. To him it was all dust and ashes. He was guilty—all else was a mere farce and an utter weariness.

The doctor's smooth, handsome face remained set in grave imperturbable lines, as he continued:

“This fact, of course, makes it certain that the accused must be acquitted of charges two and three; and that being the case, releases me from certain obligations of silence that would necessarily have been imposed upon me, had there been—as I not unreasonably supposed—evidence concerning the statements in the specifications of those charges.

“I will beg the indulgence of the Court, and of the judge advocate, if in the remarks I wish to offer I do not confine myself to the—I was about to say ‘facts in evidence,’ but as there are none, I am compelled to repeat the expression—legal aspects in this case.

PEACE AND THE VICES

"I have known the accused over twelve years. As his friend I can only tell you what every man who has been thrown with him knows to be true: he is incapable of conscious wrong; as his physician, I can tell you that civil war within the borders of a man's own soul is the true 'fire and brimstone.' Those of you who carry within you the peace of inherited mental and physical balance are raw recruits drawn up in judgment upon an old soldier, worn, and scarred and very weary, after almost as many spiritual battles as there are days of his adult life. Fighting always alone, without the cheers of comrades when winning; bearing in silence defeat. If now and again we see him falter, shall we not rather call out 'courage!' to so heavily burdened a man, and trust that our very faith in him may work for his good? I do not think the United States will be the loser by trusting her honor a little longer to such a man as the accused. The best men at Apia—shall we instance?—were not among the first-class conduct men, but were the delinquents, masted everlastingly for unblackened boots, bright-work neglected, bags not in order, not irreproachable conduct ashore. And so I think a war with elements outside of himself—the war we are all standing ready for every hour of our

SECOND DAY OF THE COURT-MARTIAL

lives—will act as the precipitate in this man's life before us. Simply because—well, Ruskin has said it: 'The common notion that peace and the virtues of civil life flourished together I found to be wholly untenable. Peace and the vices of civil life only flourish together.' A Naval officer is like his ship—a highly complex fighting machine full of energies only kept free from rust by hard work. But the human soul among us needs more than readiness, it needs exploitation, fulfilment. It needs the one supreme hour of battle, for which everything on this ship exists, from the humblest rivet doing its honest little task down in the bottom of the boiler, to the commander-in-chief's plan of battle, now lying at the captain's hand out there in the cabin. Sometimes the pathos of all this suspended energy is borne in upon me strongly. What if an actor spent forty of his best years rehearsing behind the curtain that never lifted before his eyes? What if a lawyer was found in his office, his gray head on his books, waiting for that first client that never came? Or a physician, listening for the hurried step that had need of him all through his youth, his best middle years, and on into old age—listening, ready, to the end? Is it then to be wondered at that now and then among us Naval

PEACE AND THE VICES

officers, a man reaches out for something to bank the fires within him? It is not easy—this waiting for our chance—for any of you gentlemen, perhaps, albeit the blessing of health (or virtue, as you choose) is yours; how much less easy for one——”

“Who is guilty! I was, for four days, drunk!” came like a thunderbolt upon them all, and Fellowes was on his feet, his face that of one dead.

The habit of discipline was so ingrained in these men that save for an added tenseness about the mouth and a slight leaning forward in their chairs, the Court was outwardly as before the accused had spoken, although the president rapped for an unneeded order.

The judge advocate sprang to his feet and began to speak very rapidly.

“The case for the Government has been closed!” cried Robb.

As he spoke, Fellowes’ tall figure gave a sudden lurch and before any one could reach him, he fell heavily to the deck. Almost before his full length was measured, Robb was kneeling beside the prostrate figure tugging at the collar. Captain Penny cleared the court-room, the bell of the judge advocate rang sharply for the provost marshal, whom he waved toward the doctor, who gave him a rapid

SECOND DAY OF THE COURT-MARTIAL

low-spoken order. There was no confusion and the officers filed out silently.

Syncope, prolonged to the danger line, wiped Kent's consciousness out of the reckoning for what seemed an eternity to those who loved him, and the cabin was turned over to Robb and his assistants.

Admiral Titterington came in once needlessly tiptoeing, but thereby showing his sympathy, of which Robb took hurried note, as in his shirt-sleeves he worked unceasingly over the man who was now no longer his client, but his patient.

"Heart?" asked the admiral standing beside them looking down.

"Yes, sir. A big mental strain following a big physical strain. There has been pronounced functional trouble there for sometime; and possibly is at the root of his—other inherited troubles. But he's coming round. Admiral, it would be as well that no whisper of this reaches his wife—her condition just now is more pitiful than his. I prefer telling her myself."

"Poor children! Poor children! Nice enough world, Doctor, to live in if there was no continuity between generations, eh? Some of you scientific fellows ought to find out a way to disjunct us from our ancestors, and our descendants from

PEACE AND THE VICES

us—Jove! that would ease things up a bit, wouldn't it, Doctor?"

"It's the job for another set of men, Admiral—the priests. If they would preach the immortality of acts, the immortality of souls would adjust itself—and we physicians would have a deal less work to do," said Robb, looking up with twinkling eyes.

"Once in awhile you doctors run the fleet, you know, Robb," and the admiral smiled. "What do you advise about this poor fellow?"

"Several weeks—perhaps months—rest ashore, before he is ordered home, sir."

"Yokohama hospital?"

"No, sir, here at once. There's a little hospital up on the hill over there, not far from 'Ippon Matsu,' by the bye, and a French Sister running things, and a flower garden, high up above the line of fretting."

"Just say when," was the commander-in-chief's sole comment.

So it came to pass that the first meeting between Kent and Dora, after that heartbreaking separation, took place late that night up in the large south corner room of the high-perched hospital, whither Fellowes had been carried by six sailors.

SECOND DAY OF THE COURT-MARTIAL

Sœur Agnès herself opened the room door for Dora and pointed to the bed, to which the wife's eyes flew like weary birds back to their nest at nightfall.

Sœur Agnès stood for a moment outside the closed door and crossed herself; and then with hurrying steps went to the great Russian sailor who was dying across the hall, from a misstep on the royal-yard of a merchantman the night before. He clung to the Sister's hard hand, like a frightened child, whimpering of his fear of death in a tongue unknown to her. To touch a good woman's hand was as near prayer as the sailor had been for many a long year, in his life of two very simple things: hard work afloat, and mad orgies ashore.

It was best for the French Sister of the Order of Les Sœurs de l'Enfant Jésus not to have time to think. She fought leisure as another might evil. She was not of the line of saints whose motto is "thou shalt not," like some fanatics of negation and uselessness. Work was her mission, her recreation, her sanctuary; in that she had found a great peace. Her rugged humorous face was a very happy one; her touch, the hard, firm one of the unemotional, the insensitive; and yet she did not

PEACE AND THE VICES

wish to see the meeting between the young wife and her husband in there across the hall! She was glad, if this great Russian had to die, that his release from his agony would come that night—she had no time for lesser matters. So she sat long beside the restless giant, and neither could understand the other; and no word passed between them; but his moaning ceased when she put a crucifix in his hands, tragic from roughest labor.

“Do not touch me, please,” were Kent’s first words to his wife, spoken slowly, coldly. But she understood and waited, thankful for the dim light in the room, that her self-control need be concentrated upon her voice alone. She laid aside her hat, pushed open a shutter to let in the moonlight, doing and undoing needless things, that his eyes might become used to her and something of his load of self-despising be finally lifted from him by love’s gradual reassertion.

“Dora!” presently burst from him with a longing beyond all control and she went to him, and spent upon him all the great treasure of her heart, in which was jewelled the pure genius of loving.

“Dear, you can’t separate yourself from me, why will you insist on trying? Our lives are like two drops of water run into one—forever one.

SECOND DAY OF THE COURT-MARTIAL

Can't you see it? feel it? I believe you do! I believe you just want to hear me say it over and over, you vain person!" she prattled beside him, terribly shocked at the nearer view of his face, but hiding it as a brave woman must.

"Is your faith in me all gone?" he begged and she stooped and placed the benediction of her kiss upon his brow.

"Do not talk, dear heart. They'll tell me all that's necessary, by and by. You must be very quiet and happy up here for a little while, and I'll come each day to you! And perhaps if you are very, very good, I'll bring the baby some day." He smiled and then fell asleep at once, dropping suddenly off the edge of an exhausted consciousness.

Not until then did she give way to the pent-up agony within her heart. She sought and found the Sister of Mercy in the kitchen, the incense of a steaming broth rising about her sturdy figure. But Dora had need of another woman just then, and she forced the Sister into a chair and knelt before her and put her young head in the lap of the *religieuse* and wept until quiet returned to her. Only another woman understands when the hour comes for feminine unmasking; for she alone comprehends the great maternal necessity of that

PEACE AND THE VICES

mask. And above the kneeling figure bowed upon her knees, Sœur Agnès's eyes were closed and her lips on her little suspended cross, and she prayed for forgetfulness of a thing she had hoped forgotten.

After Talty had come and taken Dora away, the Sister prepared the Russian for his final rest, folding for him the great gnarled hands, now very white and quiet at last.

CHAPTER XV

A LAUGH AND A BLOW

"Whatsoever
Is worthy of their love is worth their anger."

THE next day Jack brought up to "The Lone Pine" the news of Kent's sentence. The admiral had issued a squadron order, stating that the Court had found Lieutenant Fellowes guilty of absence without leave, but had acquitted him of the other two charges. The sentence had been two years' suspension, but in consideration of a recommendation to clemency, signed by every member of the Court, the period of suspension was reduced to one year. He was officially released from arrest and his sword was returned to him.

The most successful teacher of gratitude is pain; and the effect of this mitigation of Kent's sentence produced a feeling of almost joy upon the sanguine natures living under the great pine tree.

There being now no further objection to Imogen's disturbing presence, Jack sent the cable

PEACE AND THE VICES

message she demanded, but it was almost a week before the morbid excitation had worked itself out, and she brought herself to the point of leaving Shanghai for Nagasaki.

Doctor D'Estrées had called at "Ippon Matsu" twice every day, since that fatal morning when Adele discovered that there were other emotional worlds besides the very small well-sheltered one to which she had been accustomed; and twice every day Mammy had invented a fresh reason for Miss Talty's non-appearance. Finally Mammy took matters in her own hands, after hearing Doctor Robb at the dinner-table threaten desperate things upon this very sore subject. One afternoon when D'Estrées came laden with fresh flowers (but a fast fading hope) she took them from his hands beamingly at the door, laid them upon the circular bench that ringed the old "Ippon Matsu" in the entrance hall, and when he turned to go away she followed him to the gate, saying in her privileged tone:

"You'se been a mighty good friend toe we-all, Doctor, an' so I'se gwine ter tole yer a piece o' news, sah! If you sud hyar it, fo' de fus' time, outen side ob our house, you'd be puffedckly jus'fied ter feel right hurt 'bout it."

A LAUGH AND A BLOW

"Well, well—what ees eet? what ees eet?" cried he irritably.

"My Miss Dell an' de orficer doctor on de 'Boston' gwine get maa'd, yas, sah! We-all's mighty pleased 'bout it, fo' Miss Dell's she's powerful oncertain kinder young lady, an' 'twould be a great res' ter see her settled. I'll say ter Miss Dell you sent yo' 'gratulations, s'all I, sah? Thank you, sah. Good-mawnin'!"

"Lord-ee! if ever ole Mammy South Car-lina see de debbil in her life, she jes' done seen 'um dis heah minute in dat yaller man's eye!" she muttered to herself, her own eyes bulging with genuine terror, as she recrossed the garden.

The accuracy of her intuition was shown by the fact that within an hour after D'Estrées' call, Dell and Robb sent for her and told her their news, and sat smiling awaiting her comment; always considered of moment upon great occasions in the family circle. She stood looking at them with eyes plainly amused at their effrontery in telling her at this late hour. Then she said, pouting her full lips and pretending a sudden embarrassment:

"I—I know puffleckly well Miss Dell was in lub wid yer, Mars' Doctor Robb, well—'bout two years ago," then she chuckled.

PEACE AND THE VICES

"Mammy, you go on out to the kitchen and stay there! The idea of your daring to say such a thing! The biggest old taradiddle you ever told in your life, and that's saying a great deal. Go on out—when I speak to you!" stormed Dell in simulated wrath, her southern accent of the strongest.

The great mouth of the negress was a dark wide-open cave full of whitest stalactites and stalagmites, and her laugh was pure melody.

"Mammy Lina, why didn't you tell me instead of keeping me on tenter-hooks all these years?" demanded Leigh, one vast smile of unalloyed joy.

"I tell on my little missy befo' she's ready ter tell on herself? De doctor dunno yer ole Mammy yit, do he, Miss Dell? An' as fer de tenting-hooks, dunno nuffin' tall 'bout 'em, sah. I doan' reckon we-all got 'em down south, does you, Miss Dell? But anyhow I'se mighty glad fo' Miss Dell, but you'se got bof yer hands chock full, sah, an' no mistake, 'scusin' de liberty." And then Adele sent her away. At the door the old servant turned and said seriously:

"Deah's a big old Mister Snake in eb'ry gyardin ob Eden; 'tain't all apples. You-all mus' watch out fo' 'um mighty spry."

"D'Estrées?" asked Robb after Mammy had

A LAUGH AND A BLOW

gone, his face becoming grave as it always did when the man's name was introduced. Dell nodded and turned her face away, a shadow falling there too; seeing which Robb said with gentle gravity:

"However, Adele, we may regret the means by which it was accomplished, you saved Kent's commission by it. Try and remember that, dear, and forget the rest."

It was several minutes before the restraint wore away, and the growing ecstasy of their love again held them in its spell—deaf, dumb, and blind to all else. Robb would have liked to come to a clear understanding with the Italian, but Dell had the American woman's dislike for interference in her love affairs and forbade it positively. A morbid fear of the man kept her from the direct way of telling, or writing, him herself the simple truth; so she took the easy sloping path of temporizing; leaving that, with other disagreeable tasks, to a spoiling Mammy.

Adele had a nature full of doors opening to all points of the compass; that she finally barred them all but one, was a harder task to be given than if the peace of solid walls encompassed her. Leigh Robb knew that the light from many windows

PEACE AND THE VICES

would always come through to his sweetheart and he rejoiced thereat, having a wise man's fear of satiety. Such a fate seemed very remote that afternoon as one hour after another sped by unreckoned. Then came a loud slam of the gate, Jack's shrill whistle, his quick step through the entrance hall, an ostentatious banging and slamming about, followed by a furious, affected cough outside the drawing-room door, all of which told its tale to Dell who, blushing scarlet, cried reproachfully to her lover:

"You've gone and told him!"

"Yes, last night. It was either talk about it, or go overboard," and then they both fell into shouts of laughter as the cough at the door became interrogative and more and more insistent, accompanied by a timid rapping.

Not until Dell called out:

"Jack, you dear old idiot, come in!" was the door carefully opened an inch at a time, amidst a shower of "ahems," and then Talty's merry face appeared with tight-shut eyes, lest they see too much.

"Now, don't you dare to tell us, as Mammy did, that you knew it nine or ten years ago," threatened Dell.

A LAUGH AND A BLOW

"My dear—in fact, I think I may now say, my dears—I never was so surprised in my whole life!" vowed Jack, striving after the expression of inspired "putti" in sacred canvases.

Then ensued such a scene of fantastic nonsense as had never before been heard in "Ippon Matsu." Robb fired them on to fresh flights by his roars of laughter, seeing under it all the perfect harmony of their relationship; infinitely preferring it to experimenting with discord.

"Family honor, Robb, closes my mouth about many things as to your choice; all I can chivalrously say——"

"Mammy has already said it," said Dell dryly; and then the doctor promptly broke the engagement and started for the door under plea of false pretences.

"One moment, beloved shipmate; I was about to say that full compensation for an otherwise grim fate lies in the acquisition of this sweet, sunny—and I think it best to be perfectly frank—effulgent spirit lying within," Jack tapped his chest with one finger and drooped his eyes coyly: "Briefly, old chap, you're in. for a soft thing in brothers-in-law," he added, relaxing suddenly into the colloquial.

PEACE AND THE VICES

So they went on revelling in the reaction from much sorrow. Then the bell rang and Imogen marched in unexpectedly, and only the long discipline of Jack's life saved the situation.

"I can judge that I have not been deeply missed by the howls of laughter that greeted me at the gate. I confess I'm a little surprised, supposing I was coming back to a house of mourning," she grieved in the old familiar way. Jack's eyes alone bore testimony to the great weariness within him.

"I came because the admiral cabled his wife to come here, and there didn't seem to be anything else to do but come over too."

A blight had fallen upon the room, however hard the other two worked to prevent it for Jack's sake; and the narrowest soul ruled supreme, as so often happens in a weak, peace-loving world.

Resenting the sudden silence, and the slow withdrawal of Dell and Robb to the farthest window, Imogen cried in an access of peevishness:

"Is Mr. Fellowes in arrest yet? Where is he? Where is Dora? Is he dismissed? For mercy's sake do tell me something about things; are you all struck suddenly dumb?"

"It was the Sun, in the fable, Imogen, that took off the man's coat—not the Wind," said Talty gravely.

A LAUGH AND A BLOW

"I don't know what you're talking about, and I doubt if you do yourself," she snapped.

But the hopeless unhappiness in the worn face went to his happy-loving nature and he went to her and began to take off her gloves.

"Never mind, old girl. Where are your traps? I'll call Mammy, and see if between us we can't make you comfortable. Dora is up at the hospital—but I'll tell you all about it later. You look all tired out—I'm afraid you've had a bad crossing."

"The China Sea was as it always is, a pot of pea-soup boiling over. I was sea-sick of course, you know perfectly well I always am. And I can tell you I'm also sick and tired of dragging about after a man who—" Jack led the way out of the room. He knew he had only to caress her to buy peace, and therein lay his martyrdom.

"It's thirteen years, eight months, twenty-one days, seven hours, and forty-five minutes since I kissed you, and I'm starving!" Robb promptly announced as soon as the door closed, seizing Dell's hand and drawing her away from a tell-tale window.

"Don't even remember the seconds!" she pouted, trying to look unhappy.

But although his speech revelled in new-found

PEACE AND THE VICES

license, his touch was ever that of tenderness and gentlest reserve.

It was quite another hour before they reached the actual point of parting long enough for him to dash down to the ship, visit his one patient in the sick-bay, renew his leave, and get back to "Ippon Matsu" in time for the usual late dinner of the Orient.

As he crossed the Bund to the landing he came face to face with D'Estrées. The two men bowed and passed on. An instant later the European turned back hastily and cried:

"Doctor Roobb, one moment, please. I have bot just heard of your happiness. Weel you accept my felicitations? There ees perhaps no one een town qui-i-te een the position that I am, to comprehend the very rare charms of the fair lady who weel be your wi-i-fe. That ees my message to her. May I ask you to deliver eet? She weel explen'. I weel dreenk *le vin d'honneur ce soir à la belle folâtre!*"

He was gone before Robb could bring himself to believe the underlying meaning in the smooth, smiling words.

When he did, he turned like a baited bull responsive to the *banderillero*, but there was nothing nearer than a jinrikisha darting around the nearest

A LAUGH AND A BLOW

corner with two *atoshi* at the back; and Robb recovered his self-control and clear vision of things.

"He wants me to risk my commission by following him now in my uniform before my head clears. He is not worth it. We Anglo-Saxons can wait and not cool off—too much. But I'll see you again to-night before I sleep, as sure as there's a God above us!"

He passed the whole evening beside Dell in a sort of trance, waiting for the hour when he should be free for what his soul panted. For the moment the world of women but fretted him; there was always something to be hidden from them.

He had come ashore in a white duck mess jacket picked up at Colombo. He would remain at "Ippon Matsu" until half-past ten, then he had until midnight to do what he had to do.

Down on the Bund that night about ten o'clock, there was the usual game of poker going on at the club, in the small, back, second-story room where it was good form to send in your name before entering, unless by previous arrangement.

D'Estrées was there as usual, with the two British residents—one English, the other Scotch—who had taught him the game some four years back.

PEACE AND THE VICES

The fourth was a new-comer, a silent giant with eyes like steel, and an unreadable face that made his bluff on a bob-tail-flush a thing to talk about for months to come.

In the afternoon he had said he was *en route* from Shanghai to Port Arthur. That was all they knew when they arranged a game for the evening. He was English apparently but spoke with a strange accent none of the others had travelled widely enough to place geographically. About quarter-past ten the Scotchman got thirsty, and proposed that a plethoric "Kitty" should pay for drinks. He clapped his hands for a "boy," signed the chit, and then they all sat back in their chairs and became human once more as they waited.

"By the bye," said the Scotchman quietly, "I took tiffin off on the American flag-ship to-day—met some awfully decent chaps—and heard a bit of news."

"Fellowes' sentence?" yawned the Englishman.

"No, no—a bit of romance if you please—wedding bells!"

"Oh, really!" only faintly suggested the exiled young Englishman's simple delight at anything so "homely," as he called it; "I'll have a look at me 'topper' to-night, by Jove!"

A LAUGH AND A BLOW

"What weel you wager that I cannort give you at once the nems?"

"Is this a club or what is it?" queried the stranger, and they all understood.

"Oh, I weel nort mention the lady's nem, gentlemen, have no fear of that," said D'Estrées, his face very pale, his voice vibrating peculiarly, so that the stranger turned in his chair and watched him with interest.

"I'll lay you one-half your wine-chits for the month," came from the cautious Scot and they all laughed.

"The young *medico avocat* on the 'Boston' who defended Fellowes defended hees future brother-eeen-law—and—I'll trouble you to sign that een blank, eef you please," cried the Italian excitedly, pushing a paper toward the Scotchman who signed.

Then the Japanese "boy" entered with a tray laden with a little colony of Tanzan, a bowl of ice, quinine and bitters, and the sacred name of "Glenlivet" written large; and all but the Italian made combinations therefrom, the "boy" unsolicited had brought him his "D. O. M." in a tiny glass, which he sipped daintily. Then when they all sat back satisfied with their brewings, D'Estrées leaned forward glass in hand, his eyes alight, and remarked:

PEACE AND THE VICES

"I have a toast to offer, weel you dreenk weet me? May a nem'less American find honey left where a nem'less European has already seeped, under the 'Ippon Matsu'!"

"You scoundrel!" shouted the stranger, and his fist flew out across the table. There was a moment's confusion and the Scotchman locked the door, while the Italian who had forgotten all languages but his own got up from the floor. But when he was on his feet, Captain Fitchett's hand went out again and took him by the collar and shook a retraction out of him, word for word.

"Eet ees true, what I have said!" hissed the doctor between each enforced word, English returning to him.

"Well, I say it's a lie! Now, then—go ahead—repeat what I told you and be quick about it, too!" And when it was over, he flung the half-strangled man from him, as he would have a discarded glove, and D'Estrées fell against the door, felt blindly for the handle, tugged at it, unlocked it, and fled.

Then Fitchett sat down and deliberately took out a huge blue silk handkerchief and slowly wiped his face, neck, and hands, and the others stood and watched him smiling, glorying in the common blood they shared with him.

A LAUGH AND A BLOW

"It's a darned hot night, and it'll rain before another morning," was all he said for sometime. A little later he added:

"They are my friends at 'Ippon Matsu,' gentlemen; and that Dago lied," and the gray eyes challenged in turn those of the other two, before he went on: "I guess" (and the two listeners knew him for exactly what he was) "if we do live out here away from home eyes to help keep us straight, a good woman's name is still a sacred thing among us, I take it," was all the explanation he vouchsafed, and they insisted on shaking his hand much to his disgust; and then the German consul strolled in with a privileged air, and the game went on.

Teodoro D'Estrées' ruling passion was vanity, and after one look at his face in the mirror in his own hall, he packed a dress-suit case, wrote a note to the old French doctor up on the hill (whose retirement had given the Italian his practice) turning over to him his patients temporarily, offering too large a bonus to admit of refusal. Then D'Estrées went at once on board the Nippon Yusen steamer which sailed for Kobe at midnight that night. And no one, not even the Frenchman, knew his whereabouts for two months. Robb regretted that evening to the end of his life.

PEACE AND THE VICES

The physical wound on D'Estrées' face from Fitchett's blow, wore off far more quickly than the moral on his soul. The man drifted about no longer satisfied with himself. The memory of evil done is (at no time, nor to anyone who ever sinned) a pleasant companion. Surely no one but a saint could have conceived of the necessity of any further hell!

The day after the scene at the club, Dell received a large package and a note, brought by a Russian sailor to the door. Robb was with her when it came and cut the string with his penknife and watched the girl's pretty delight and wonder, as the seductions of many yards of gorgeous white Chinese brocade poured over her lap on to the floor about her feet.

"Where's the letter? Quick, do find it! I can't imagine who could have sent me such a thing as this—why—" her eyes once upon the paper's contents her voice died away, and presently she looked up into Robb's face with tears running down her own, and silently handed him the note.

"I am passing through on my steamer, out of my usual course. I leave for Port Arthur in an hour. I wish I could tell you of this great silent,

A LAUGH AND A BLOW

creeping Russia—but I can't, she's my boss. Some day your children will study what I know and recite it at school. And that brings me to what I want to say: I heard last night the news of your engagement to a Navy man. I'm glad he's an American. I inquired around to-day, and I hear he's the right thing; and so all I've got to say is that I hope you'll be as happy as I know he will. I was bringing you over this parcel anyhow and now I've heard the news, perhaps you'll kindly accept it as a wedding present from—Manthy and me. I took her some like it when I went home and she made such a fuss about it, I wanted you should have some too. It wouldn't do for a wedding-dress, would it? I liked getting it. I made believe things—to myself. I do, sometimes. I guess I'm lonely. The kind of thoughts I have can't hurt you, not a bit. It's just the same now as before, as far as I am concerned—it couldn't be, that's all. But I'd like to know first rate, as years go on, if you don't mind—and *he* don't—I'd like to know once in a while, just to which port to consign the freight of my very best thoughts, when I send them out to you, as I've got to do till the end. God bless you, dear. Good-by.

“EZRA FITCHETT.”

PEACE AND THE VICES

Robb had to choke down something in his own throat before he could quiet Adele, now openly given over to woe and self-reproach.

"Even if I had not given myself to you," she finally confessed in tones of deep abasement, "I never, never should have—flirted again as long as I live, never! This man and—that other—the two extremes of masculine love, have cured me," and Robb had the tact not to laugh.

"Adele, it isn't just you—you pretty tantalizing thing—it's what you represent: the immutable feminine, which we men began to fear was becoming extinct—and so when we do find it we all go a little mad, I suppose," he remarked sighing—for the others.

Before morning the warm rain began to fall; gently at first and then in great whirling screaming gusts. This continued for four hot, sticky, almost unendurable, days and nights; and when it cleared, the scorching summer was at an end.

CHAPTER XVI

LAST WEEKS IN NAGASAKI

"A soft star trembles through the drifting clouds."

IT was many weeks before a medical board of survey, of which the American fleet surgeon was senior member, pronounced Lieutenant Fellowes to be in a fit condition to return to the United States by mail steamer, pursuant to his sentence.

There were days when even Dora was not allowed to see him, and Sœur Agnès's cool disciplined hand alone served him, the very aloofness of her quiet face giving him a feeling of deep peace. The excess of her energy had once, during a time when the little hospital was almost empty, overflowed into the making of a flower-garden, now repaying her generously. This became Kent's daily interest, and almost the sole topic of conversation between them, for he spoke just enough French to confine thought within safe limits, for one in his condition. So he knew when the hibiscus had begun to fade; the miniature maples to show

PEACE AND THE VICES

the first signs of a later radiance; the quick sprouting and promise among the chrysanthemums; the marvel of the constancy of the amber-colored coreopsis. And yet he seldom left his long Chinese chair on the broad veranda, which Dora's insight had so placed that his back was turned to the bay; and his eyes rested on the ring of trees about the hospital, or the lesser growing things about, each intent on its own little silent mission. Rest, silence, nature, and the sense of distance above the busy tangle of ordinary life below, on the other side of the great screen of trees, slowly brought back health to mind and body alike. With health returned its unrest, interest in the world, the great weariness of subjective thought, and his convalescence retrograded.

He stood back from his own life and groped for the meaning of things, the reason of his recurrent mania, the cause of that fatal dependence on something outside of himself to renew his balance—not only mental and moral but physical—in these strange conditions of cumulative psychical agony.

He was not a religious man and found no comfort in symbolism, nor in any of the other avenues of introverted thought. An idea that found no exponent in action was a miscarriage of life's purpose.

LAST WEEKS IN NAGASAKI

To use a muscle was to keep it from deterioration. He had always had a strong sense of the disproportion between his energies and the needs of his environment.

One day Robb's short speech in the court-room returned to Kent. Was reaction from desuetude at the root of his vice? Was it psychical? Or an anæmic condition of the circulation, as Robb held. Was it possible that cure would come if the needs of his soul were fed in the one case, and of his body in the other? With Dora's help, her love, her inspiration perhaps some day it would all combine to give him his freedom. Then suddenly a thought struck him between the eyes like a blow; and Sister Agnès found him lying unconscious when she came; and she sent two messengers flying over the hills, one for the French doctor, and the other for the wife. But she brought him round before either came; only there was a look in his eyes she had not seen before.

With consciousness returned that terrible thought (already part of his being thenceforth, through that familiar miracle of mental alchemy): "If the great chance of war should come now! Now while I am thus temporarily stricken off the fighting list! If there is goodness encompassing

PEACE AND THE VICES

us I will be spared that! That one thing! I'll be spared that!"

Only in sleep did this leave him, or when alone with his wife, yielding to the unfailing regeneration that reached him through the baptism of her love.

To speak a dreaded thought is to give it added vitality, and he was superstitiously silent; but not until this obsession slowly wore away, did his real recovery begin. No one knew what it was that so mysteriously delayed a restoration fully warranted by the diagnosis that found no organic trouble with the patient's heart. As September drew to a close, and she had been assured all fear of danger was past but that Kent could not be sent home for many weeks more, Dora insisted that life at "Ippon Matsu" should go on its way bravely, merrily, rejoicing that all would soon be well. Anything less would suggest a secret cause for shame and sorrow, not for one moment warranted—to her staunch mind—by Kent's "unhappiness," as she always called it, on the very rare occasions when she referred to their trouble at all.

Talty upheld her in this decision, sharing the family preference for a flag flying to a flag furled.

And so "Ippon Matsu" brooded under its green

LAST WEEKS IN NAGASAKI

wings many happy, chirping hours, nestling a little blindly against the warm maternal heart of things.

The "Boston" was in the Tategami dock; "high and dry, southern exposure, superb view, noise to beat the German band, board and lodging one dollar Mex. a day," was Jack's summing up of the situation.

The flag-ship remained because the admiral thought that he had forgotten more about docking a ship than "old Pehoe" ever had known.

There was tennis and inefficacious cake at the club twice a week, hops on every flag-ship in the harbor; dances at the hotel; teas, tiffins, dinners everywhere. A perfect epidemic of social energy had broken out now that the worst of the heat was over, and the ships still lingered. Imogen and Dell took a trip to Unzen, and a third of the American Navy acted as escort; and the usual jokes were made anent the geysers named "Middle Class Hell," "The Loud Wailing," and "The Thousand Odors."

Even Imogen bloomed stuntedly in her humorless (and yet comical) way, and was the promulgator of many and varied forms of human restlessness known as pleasure. There were picnics on Rat Island where nobody did anything with the serene

PEACE AND THE VICES

conscience of the Orient. And always, when imagination grew weary, there was the usual daily bathing down the bay at Pappenberg; day in and day out, summer after summer, by the wise, and rather weary, old residents. All there was of European society the Americans met there on the beach, which was dotted with a score of tea-tables, fully and fastidiously equipped by the small army of native servants.

The flotilla of waiting house-boats, and *sam-pans*, tugged restlessly at their long ropes eager to get back to their play with the wind and tide.

Undressing in their house-boats (on which the *sendo* quickly rigged up strange canvas closets for the purpose) the company soon reappeared and plunged therefrom into the blue waters of the bay. Men leaving the town grim and white with the heat became in a few minutes rollicking boys, and bald-heads challenged gray-heads with all of boys' self-vaunting. The women and the children bathed a little apart, that their timidity might escape ridicule. Then followed the second disappearance into the house-boats, from whence came smothered shouts for towels, or mislaid shoes; and now and then a howl of laughter from the huge house-boat of the bachelors' mess.

LAST WEEKS IN NAGASAKI

From this eclipse they came forth one and all ravenous for tea; and swarmed about the little tables like a species of great white fly—for all the world wore white. The bachelors were distributed about among the tea-centres, gratefully eating as little as they could and still survive those sudden gnawing pangs.

And by and by when the island's own shadow overspread them, the tables were folded, the tea paraphernalia packed as only the Japanese can, the boats fell into line or spread out fan-like, and "society" went home through the twilight. Singing sometimes as they went, old songs that unite all English-speaking hearts exiled from home, all over the face of the world—songs which bring back much the same memories, irrespective of many accents.

Like one big tolerant family the Americans, English, Scotch and Irish—cooled off, some very happy, some a little sleepy, all a little wistful—drifted up the pretty bay whose hill-sides are wooded to the foot.

When all else of Adele's life in Japan became blurred by time and change and elbowing circumstance, that pensive home-bound hour, with Leigh beside her, remained forever a thing apart

PEACE AND THE VICES

in her memory; untranslatably tender to hearts that had not shared it.

"If it could only go on forever like this," she brooded to him, as (now always behind the others) they lingered in the summer-house at "Ippon Matsu," for the good-night benediction given and taken in the kindly night, now fallen.

"May the day never come, sweetheart, when you will pray for any change, so that it be a change, for that is the sign of a starving heart. You are happy! That is as it should be. You were meant for happiness, dear, it brings out the best of you. Do you know to-night a real radiance comes from you here in the dark! A sort of phosphorescence—is it love, do you suppose? Perhaps if very, very perfect, love does become visible—else what should be that light? Tell me, is it love? Oh, my darling, why can we not all (and always) take this great gift of life and just be happy as you and I are to-night?"

A little later she said:

"Well, for one thing let's agree not to expect perfection until we're sure we're giving it. There's a lot in that, I think. And I'll go further than that, I wish as time went on you'd acquire a taste for a slight imperfection."

LAST WEEKS IN NAGASAKI

"Oh, I have it now!" he laughed, and of course she punished him by a system of small reprisals quite their own; over which they were still disputing, when Mammy's voice, full of a great tenderness, came to them through the dark:

"O—O Miss Dell! You-all bes' come on in ter dinner, an' not gobble up all de dessert de fus' thing, den yer ain' got no inclunation fo' de soup."

"Soup!" groaned Robb. "O tempora, O mores! O Icarus! I, like thee, flew too near the sun!"

Then the three days in October given over to the *Osuwa Matsuri* came and went, when Nagasaki repeats the festival of the Guilds of Florence of the Fourteenth Century, and all the world turns child again and runs about the streets, frantic lest something be missed.

Julie and Haru, with a rehabilitated Yamaguchi for escort beside their jinrikisha, followed in the wake of the great, green "Dragons," from morning till night, enjoying the delights of protected terror. Their elders felt for symbols amidst all that bewildering pomp and glitter, and strange theatric conventions; but in vain; even among the educated natives much of the meaning of one of the most elaborate festivals of Japan is lost in the

PEACE AND THE VICES

long vista of centuries through which it has wandered down to the present day.

Not until Sœur Agnès's chrysanthemums were in full bloom, did Kent Fellowes walk down to "Ippon Matsu," and take his place once more in life's procession that halts for no one. The last glimpse they had of the faithful Sister was just before Kent, his wife beside him, dipped down over the hill when he stopped and looked back. Sister Agnès, thinking they had gone, was down upon her knees in the *kiku* bed, pinching off buds of no promise that the others might flourish, just as she pruned her own daily flower-bed of thoughts; and her face was hidden under the veil and wimple.

The younger officers of the American Squadron, who were all more or less under the spell of Adele's unquenchable charm, and who openly worshipped Dora with great lumps in their throats that prevented idle speech, were inclined to give the Fellowes' party a hilarious send-off, the day they sailed on the Pacific Mail steamer for the United States. But the older men promptly vetoed it, having a deeper insight into hearts. To keep down the number, they drew lots as to the privilege of going to the steamer the day of sailing.

The admiral's cruise was at an end, and much

LAST WEEKS IN NAGASAKI

to his regret he had been ordered home; going via Suez. These last months of his last command afloat were full of pathos to him. Not even to his wife could he put into words what it meant to him. Nothing that the service could offer him ashore, would for one instant compensate for the renunciation of supreme command over his squadron, his own will dominated alone by the winds of heaven; the smell of the sea his rightful incense; the limits of the horizon his ever-changing empire; far, far away, thank Providence! from bureaucracy, and meddling, ignorant, political fingers. They were his last days of freedom and he knew it, and he groaned aloud as he tramped the poop-deck reserved to his use.

So Mrs. Titterington went home with the others. Imogen remained, and she said and thought that it was Jack's wish; which is monument enough for one man's honest endeavor to preserve social order, all too ready to crumble.

Imogen had urged Adele to remain with her on the station, and for once Robb formed a sympathetic alliance with her, and went suddenly blind as to her faults of character. But Adele and Mammy after many consultations, finally decided to go with the others and help them through the year of

PEACE AND THE VICES

exile ahead of them. Adele knew by the cost of this decision that it was right. Imogen (who had counted much upon the reflected glory of her strangely popular sister-in-law) became so abusive the instant she decided to leave, that the burden of Adele's resolution seemed lifted from her, save when she met Robb's reproachful eyes.

It was a sunny day, cold with the nip of winter in the air, when they bade farewell to "Ippon Matsu," nothing but the leaven of homely detail preventing tears. Whether the upflung arms of the old pine over the house bade them begone, or cried to heaven that they might remain, they could not tell; but as they slowly steamed down the bay, it was the last thing they saw; all except Kent, whose eyes clung to his ship's flag.

But the good-by on the steamer's deck was after all a right merry one. Half the foreign residents of the warm-hearted little town were there. The bachelors' mess had achieved an imposing, un-Japanese, composition in golden chrysanthemums which, with similar offerings, lay at Adele's feet. To Dora they brought a single late rose, or a hot-house carnation, and the English boy who produced one mauve-colored orchid looted from a great man's conservatory, was cheered for his

LAST WEEKS IN NAGASAKI

prowess if not his principles. Young Sault had waited apart till they had all paid tribute to true womanliness in Dora's form, and then he had advanced from cover and smuggled into her unwilling hand a parting tiny gift of old gold lacquer which represented, as she knew at a glance, every dollar he had had "on the books." He stood before her flushed and glorying in the severe scolding he was receiving for his extravagance.

"You've taught me such a lot, don't you know, Mrs. Fellowes," he muttered, biting his lips to keep from laughing from the pure joy of giving lavishly for once in his life.

"The difference between Makusu and Nabashima or between old Imari and its imitations, and—and a few other things, perhaps—what is that to this exquisite priceless thing, you naughty boy!" she cried.

"Well, I guess it's the 'few other things' that got me! Anyhow, lots of things look different since you've been so good to me, Mrs. Fellowes. I've learned the difference between the real and the imitation in heaps of things beside Imari. I know now what I did not before, that it's a fellow's business to hustle along, all right, but to think a little of his elbows and umbrella and other people's ribs

PEACE AND THE VICES

and eyes; that's the great act, after all! And—and all that! You know what I'm after. Father says I have the vocabulary of a bootblack, and I guess that's about the size of it."

Imogen was conspicuously present, with her nine historic remedies for sea-sickness her sole topic of smileless conversation, and yet furnishing unconsciously the "comic relief" that prevented the expression of many strong emotions, as well kept under on this occasion.

Jack Talty was here, there, and everywhere, easily tracked by the wake of following laughter.

The admiral's beautiful gracious wife held a court of her own a little apart from the others, the admiral himself sunk in undisguised melancholy from which she sought in vain to rally him.

Kent was already lying in his long chair, bundled up to the eyes in rugs, and thither went in turn the older officers with words of faltering cheer.

Julie, held for the last time in O Haru's loving arms, received too her meed of attention. Half the bachelors in town brought her a native toy to help her—and her elders—through the long voyage ahead.

Nearby—tall, erect, silent, ever a striking

LAST WEEKS IN NAGASAKI

figure—stood Mammy, with restless eyes roving from group to group.

No one had need of her just then. Hours ago she had placed all the staterooms of her party in readiness for whatever betided outside; and once in the Inland Sea there was time for more leisurely unpacking. Now and then, when an officer of the American fleet went up to Mammy and bade her farewell, shaking her warmly by the hand, her stern face melted into that smile they all knew so well, and the beautiful voice made its pleased response.

She alone of the whole household had heard, through the colored steward of the club, of the scene in the poker-room, of which the whole town was now whispering. Not until all communication with the shore had ceased and the steamer was well under way, would Mammy feel safe from the machinations of the Italian, whose blackness of heart she greatly overestimated, with her innate gift for drama. In the meantime she deeply enjoyed her rôle as secret detective in that apparently light-hearted company.

Later on Adele and Robb were seated in the "Social Hall," holding hands face to face, white and smileless with the pain of parting, which they

PEACE AND THE VICES

had not fully realized until now in the midst of it, with the first gong impending.

"I wish to heaven I had insisted on your marrying me here at once, and then you could have stayed out here on the station till my cruise was over," fumed he.

"I did want to."

"Adele! it isn't too late! I'll find Jack," and he was half way to the door; and not until he heard her laugh did he see the absurdity of it and return to her side, his eyes glued to hers, an anguish in his heart that seemed unendurable.

"Well, the day after I reach you at the end of the cruise, swear that you'll marry me? No fuss, no feathers!"

"Dear, I love the fuss and I have a special yearning after the feathers of life. It's one of the imperfections you'll have to face, I'm afraid."

"You don't mean a church wedding, and ushers, and things?" No less an emotion than horror was written upon his face.

"If by 'things' you mean bridesmaids, my reply is yes. I want the whole ceremony that gives me to you for life to be very, very beautiful, with music running through it all, from the: 'Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight

LAST WEEKS IN NAGASAKI

of God,' down to: 'that ye may so live together in this life.' It must all stand for harmony, to the ear, to the eye, to the heart. I like, Leigh, dear, to look upon it as a sacrament, not a social festivity only."

"Ah, you women love symbols," he murmured, his soul full of untranslatable poesy, as he watched her uplifted eyes, the best that was in him standing bare-headed before her, worshipping. A moment later he added: "May I tell you why I feel absolutely sure of my future happiness, sweetheart? Because you have the same blood in your veins that Dora and Jack have. The bacillus of divorce lies in each of their marriages—the possibility of chaos and destruction lies in all marriages—but each goes bravely on with it, one with love to help, one without even that. There's good strong stuff in you, my darling, and I hope I may remain worthy of it, not fall back upon it unworthily."

But the girl's thoughts were still on her wedding-day, and he laughed aloud when she said dreamily:

"And Mammy is to sit in a pew, way up in front all by herself, where she can see my train. And I'll wear Captain Fitchett's brocade, veiled a little with chiffon. Oh, and I'll have my picture taken

PEACE AND THE VICES

and sent to him! Isn't that a heavenly idea, Leigh?"

"It is a heavenly idea, sweetheart," he said tenderly.

"And I want piles and piles of officers there in special full-dress uniform—Leigh, will they wear it if I ask them?"

"Why, of course, dear child."

"And later I'll cut the cake with your sword, as they do in the Army; and I'll have a ring, and a thimble, and a sixpence in the wedding-cake; and—and then we'll go away together, love, just you and I, and the door of my girlhood will be locked forever behind me!"

"Adele, Adele, how can I wait?" She clung to him, sobbing.

"You will be very, very good to me, Leigh? Oh, you must be very kind to me! And love me, love me, love me always?"

"You drive me mad," he muttered choked with feeling. He disengaged himself gently and walked away striving for control, that she might not go from him thus unhappily.

Presently he returned and sat once more beside her, master of his own mood and hers, speaking in the light tone that best quieted her, he said:

LAST WEEKS IN NAGASAKI

"Well, if you are determined, little woman, on having all the 'feathers' aforesaid, please for pity's sake have the beastly things all ready to tie on when I get free of the ship."

"They don't 'tie' on, but I'll have them ready, sir, at your command," and she saluted him with her one free hand in pale tearful imitation of her old blithesome self, and the pathos of it went to his heart suddenly and for a few minutes her pretty ears burned with his ravings.

Then the first gong sounded and their eyes laid in a store for future hungry hours.

"I don't care if the telescopes of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America are upon us, I'm going to kiss you good-by!" And he did, but no one saw them save the cupids on the frescoed ceiling, and it was right in their line, and they beamed a carmine approval.

"I must say one word to Kent!" He flew out across the gangway to the promenade deck. The two men had but a moment together, with close-clasped hands.

"A severe illness is a sort of rebirth, Fellowes. You can begin now almost with new bricks and build up to suit your healthiest self."

"And a year on your brother's ranch is best?"

PEACE AND THE VICES

I don't feel sure, Robb; I don't feel sure!" murmured Kent very shaken, very pale, leaning back against his pillows in a strained tense way, the doctor had no time to relieve.

"I know, Fellowes, take my word for it. Work, work, work! Let your only leisure be spent in the deep sleep that will inevitably come to you; and two quarts, at least, of milk a day—between meals!"

"All right, Doctor, but I loathe the stuff."

"You'll cry for it before long—cry like a child—and now good-by, and peace be with you and yours," and he had to run for the gangway.

As the steamer slowly headed about, the surrounding boats stood away from it. The great coal-barges with their swarm of nimble-handed humanity, the most rapid coal-passers in the world and the cheeriest; the steamship's launch crowded with the smiling waving townspeople; Admiral Titterington's barge, in which he sat in glorious solitude, his eyes clinging to a golden head he loved; the several cutters from the other American men-of-war filled with officers, laughing and chaffing one another lest the home-longing in all their hearts get the better of them. Standing in one was Jack, pantomiming a frenzy of despair

LAST WEEKS IN NAGASAKI

that made even the Japanese on-looking laugh in quick sympathy. Imogen on the hotel launch screamed out a forgotten message standing distraught, dishevelled, so near the rail that a native runner for the hotel politely touched her on the arm, whereat she whirled upon him, with abundant gesture, and so faded out of sight and hearing.

O Haru san and the other Japanese servants at "Ippon Matsu," were in a *sampan*. After the little *amah's* last glance up at Julie's tiny white form in the arms of her black rival, she fell head-long into her trailing sleeve in a paroxysm of weeping; and Yamaguchi gazed in pity down upon the shiny black head so near his shoulder, and Mammy, watching, formed a hasty conclusion.

And so the great home-bound steamer sped down the bay, past the German flag-ship where the band played Mendelssohn's "Consolation," a special tribute to Adele from the captain, whose music-loving heart she had won by her singing. The other ships silently dipped their flags in reply. The little party on the deck of the steamer lingered in silence leaning on the rail, Kent among them, Dora's hand on his arm. Then Mammy called her and she left him. He looked back and sought and found the flag of his ship and something tore at his heart.

PEACE AND THE VICES

A sound very like a groan came from him, and he went back to his chair, lying with closed eyes, and his mouth a hard line of bitterest agony.

But after awhile it came to pass that the admiral's wife came and sat down in her steamer chair on the left side of his, and after a long look at the wan pinched face beside her she became alarmed and leaned over and touched his arm. He opened his eyes and spoke from his soul, as often seems easier to do with strangers than to those closer to the inward life.

"Suppose that war should come—Cuba, Spain, it's in the air—now while I am out of it, like this!" he said abruptly.

It so happened that she was a fine woman, and strong (in herself and in her social relation) and she understood at once and said, smiling into his face:

"I make you a promise—and I don't make many—if it comes you shall be in it—remember!"

It must have been his weakened condition that gave this daring statement from a young woman's smiling lips sufficient import to bring him peace, but it did.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WIFE'S REWARD

"Rejoice that man is hurled
From change to change unceasingly,
His soul's wings never furled."

FOUR months later a man was riding home along a dead flat road, through miles of young orange-trees, planted pitilessly equidistant, the rough dry ploughed earth beneath them unrelieved by a flower, a blade of grass, a single weed. The endless heart-rending fight for moisture in the great valleys of Southern California leads to the uprooting of all vegetable life save that having a market value. Over half the year the choking desert is dependent on artesian wells, and is then transformed into a wondrous plenitude by the few inches of winter rain, which they were only learning the secret of hoarding, by the erection of reservoirs up among the foot-hills miles away. They were facing a third dry season, with Polonius-like eyes magnifying every passing bit of flying fleece in the relentlessly blue sky.

PEACE AND THE VICES

In great following clouds of dust the man and his horse went on, in the easy cheerful gallop of a mustang who smells his stable, albeit three miles away. As they crossed the county road, beyond which lay the Ojitos Ranch, a man tore by at right angles on a high raw-boned horse and shouted out, tugging at his reins:

"Captain Fellowes! Wait a minute." He finally succeeded in partly checking his hard-mouthed beast, and turning about in his saddle he leaned on his horse's flank, and yelled to the other horseman:

"The 'Maine' has been sunk in the harbor of Havana! The papers say it means war as sure as the Lord made little apples! See you tomorrow at the works. S'long!" And in an instant, a great ball of dust bowling away was all that marked his whereabouts.

Kent never remembered clearly the next ten minutes. He slid off his horse because he could not stay on, and he stood leaning his weight against the sweating, panting body, with one arm about the neck of the wondering animal, who turned his head to see what it meant; after one obstinate moment of bracing for the expected cinch, which did not come. And Kent clung there for sheer support,

THE WIFE'S REWARD

and the touch of some warm living thing, until the first whirl of the storm had passed.

The dumb brute's nose nuzzled against the stricken man's shoulder inquiringly, and he started and raised his face and with a broken laugh that sounded strange in that great sea of dust-choked silence, he said aloud:

"You want your supper, don't you, old fellow? I haven't forgotten. You and I will go straight home—it's the best place for us to-night."

After a little he was able to remount his horse, and turn his head from the county highway into the ranch-road, heading away from the town, where lay the post-office and its one mail a day, due at six o'clock. Kent went for it every evening on his way home from the water-works where his engineering studies at the Academy had found an unexpected outlet. Dazed, stooping low in his saddle, his bronzed face blanched with the news, Kent went home, almost walking his horse the whole way, much to that intelligent beast's puzzlement. Fellowes had expanded into a brawny, dust-colored giant, with a hand as steady as a blacksmith's. Between his sad eyes was a deep furrow that stood for he alone knew how many struggles with temptation, from all of which he had come off victorious.

PEACE AND THE VICES

The sun, and the rain, and the wind had melted, and cleansed and blown away much of the strength of the evil spirit within him, and each fight had been easier to win than the preceding one. And now to have this come to him from the outside world, where men grow strong battling with human certainties, not with the slow-moving uncertainties of the elements, that relax one's whole being into a fatalistic peace. After the first shock of the news the innate national distrust of journalistic verities reasserted itself in Fellowes' mind, and he made for himself a *tourniquet* of doubt to stop the bleeding of his wound.

As far as Dora's watchful eyes saw her husband's figure coming in the yellow light, she noted with a return of the old terror a change in his bearing. She waited for him at the gate, within which was the unpurchasable peace and beauty of a home, redeemed from that dry commercialism beyond the low white fence.

There was a small two-story frame house, less than commonplace save for the Virginia creeper that burned its fingers on the chimneys and only then withdrew; and the fuchsias that peered saucily into the nursery windows on the second floor. Below, a lawn surrounded the house, and flower-beds,

THE WIFE'S REWARD

and trees sheltered from the burning sun; palms and eucalyptus, lemon-trees, towering magnolias, prunes and almonds; and under a great pepper-tree a hammock hung, with books and magazines on the grass below it. Julie and Mammy swung in it. Dell's voice rang out singing somewhere in the rambling house. It was a home in fact to which Kent returned from the rugged 'raising ranges' outside, that bloomed only for the market-place.

His quiet greeting of Dora at the gate dispelled at once her fear, but replaced it by another less defined.

"Was there no mail, Kent?" cried Dell running down the path.

"I have not gone for it yet," he said with a gravity that changed the subject in that sympathetic household.

"I'll take de horse 'round toe de stable, Cap'n. Ah Song he's busy, sah," said Mammy taking the bridle from him, quick to note changes in the moods about her.

He went into the house where he removed the ravages of the day, coming to the dinner-table with himself well in hand, and wondering a little at the store of strength within him, hitherto unknown.

Dora noticed that after the meal was over (when

PEACE AND THE VICES

they were wont to sit on the veranda while he smoked, Dell with her guitar or *ukulele*) he lighted neither cigar nor pipe, but went outside, took two whiffs of a cigarette and tossed it out on the lawn. Then coming to the door he called out:

"Dora, are you very busy?"

"Did you ever know a Talty who let work interfere with pleasure?" was her answer going to him and leaning against his shoulder, secure in the dark that now enveloped their silent world.

"I must go in for the mail. I have ordered the top-buggy, it will keep a little of the dust off. Will you get on your things and come with me, please, dear? I do not wish to be alone to-night."

He told her the news as they drove through the night together.

She had the rare tact not to touch him in his present mood, in which the man in him was crying out for the world of men. She asked quick direct questions, and took the answers in silence.

At the post-office they found an excited crowd of men and boys, gathered from all the surrounding ranches within a radius of fifteen miles. The old familiar forerunners of war-rumor were all there, as in the larger cities all over the country that night, from one ocean to the other. The relief of

THE WIFE'S REWARD

much speech, the gathering about the loudest speaker; the flaring posters, read and reread; cheers, thin only through smallness of number, not the lack of heart; and the outlet of much drinking, as the wires remained dumb to their nervous impatience.

Fellowes gave the reins to his wife, in front of the flaring drug-store, where she was at once joined by the ambitious young apothecary, who mounted guard over her with an eye to the future, having twice laid eyes upon a red-haired goddess who lived at Los Ojitos.

The crowd of men instantly gathered with shouts about Fellowes, proud of a man among them who knew the great official centre to which the eyes of the nation were turned. In telling them the many reasons why there might yet not come war, he convinced and quieted himself. The news that day made of many states, many political parties, much social unrest, one solid people under one flag; waiting to sign their names to the rolls: "Ready and willing to march," as in the old days when the continental army was being gathered together all over the land.

When nothing else was to be wrung out of the town, Kent and Dora went home.

PEACE AND THE VICES

Night after night through all those weeks of suspense from that early spring day, Dora went with Kent for the mail and they counted together in breathless silence those few pulse-beats of the outer world, that came to them in their isolation.

And then the day came when the news flew out to the Works, that the slow wrath of a great nation poured itself out in the three words: "War is declared!"

Beyond all imagining Fellowes tasted torment from that moment, trebled by the questions asked by men about him, ending in the hideous iteration: "How will it affect you, Captain, d'yer mind telling us?" "I'm officially as good as dead, that's all," he would say, and turn and fly from them. Then when it became unbearable, he went home. Nor was there any peace there, although the questions ceased, as he did not tell them then the news, at last authenticated beyond all further doubting.

Dora's heart shrivelled up in her breast, as she saw him start alone in the buggy after dinner, not even asking her to join him as usual. At the gate she ran to him and begged to be taken, and he scarcely answered her in unwonted discourtesy that told her the worst.

Lashing the horse he dashed out through the

THE WIFE'S REWARD

night, the devil in him thoroughly aroused. He wanted to be alone! He was sick and tired of restraint. Tired of the dreary round of uncongenial work amidst his mental inferiors; tired of the tiny space within the low white fence, with the flowers and trees just the same, month in and month out; tired of the staring blue sky that never veiled its brazen face; tired of the women, Dell, Mammy, and yes—sometimes tired of Dora too, God bless her! tired of his child, soul-sick for the old life.

And now—ah, he could see it all! The repressed fierce joy in all their hearts; no longer drooping in routine. The ship's report-book empty of names. The toppers, sober; the lazy ones, working like bees; the sullen men, laughing in loud bursts; the indifferent, alert and keen of eye. And the ward-room! Each face came before him transformed in its own way by this miracle of promised combat for the nation's name and fame.

Dashing along through the clouds of stifling dust, the light vehicle swaying from side to side at every turn, the horse responsive to the man's maddened mood, alone, beyond all human aid—Kent's great punishment came to him in that hour under the quiet skies, and he cursed the day he was born into the world.

PEACE AND THE VICES

And when the game of battle was fairly on! His memory abetted by imagination, spared him nothing. His ship was there before his wide staring eyes, and every animate and inanimate thing upon it. Pehoe on the bridge, within the double ring of hammocks rolled and on end, lashed all around; his eyes riveted to the glass turned upon the enemy, still miles away. The ship had been cleared for action weeks before. Into the silence tears the furious tantara of the drums beating to general quarters; the electric gongs gone mad in every compartment—this furor for several minutes. And then a voice from the bridge: "Silence!" "Cast loose and provide!" the order echoed and re-echoed by each division officer on the decks below, "That was Jack's voice—heaven help me, that was Jack!" Kent cried aloud.

"Load! common shell! Range 4,000 yards! Train on the enemy, commence firing!" One voice after another called out, Nugent's and again Talty's, and each divisional officer as his guns began to bear. He heard Russell's high clear voice, Russell who had taken his place on the "Boston"! the little niche he occupied so easily filled by another; another man had charge of *his* guns, cheered on or held in check his gun-crews, of eager men half

THE WIFE'S REWARD

mad with excitement, only kept under by a discipline relaxed to suit the moment, and a cool clear head that saw only essentials. And gun after gun thundered out over the water. The ship's routine went to the winds! The men roared when a shot told, and roared when one fell short, cursed, and stamped their feet, beating their great black hands together, frantic with the inevitable restraint of the ship's confining space; there being no outlet for energy like a dash of infantry or cavalry, up and on, following, ever onward! Oh! it was easy ashore, but here tied down in a hole, the shot only could represent their courage, their fervor, their frenzy of energy. The aim was corrected in quiet voices by the divisional officers, and now and then: "Steady, men, we can't afford to waste any shots"—and "old Dennis" (Fellowes' gun captain, now Russell's) sings out "no fear!" And the men laugh. And Kent saw with burning eyes that incorrigible old drunkard come into his best estate, cool, stung to miracles of marksmanship. Every now and then he tested the firing battery of his own gun by placing the terminals on his tongue and closing the circuit, with the air of a Faraday in his laboratory and then crying out: "Ah, but we'll put the fear of God in their hearts this day!" And

PEACE AND THE VICES

the crew about howled their approval, and Russell smiled upon them like the wise man he was; and sought to spare them from their frantic eagerness. Like one in a dream, Kent heard the rush of the ammunition rapidly "whipped up" the shoots; the powder-men receiving it, knocking open the boxes with battle-axes, and when empty, throwing or kicking them overboard; the two cadets under Russell sought to stop it, but he checked them: "Give 'em a loose rein, boys, it only frets 'em." The splash of the enemy's return shots was lost in all that uproar, and only the first lieutenant in the conning tower gave them a thought, up somewhat above the deafening din below. The constantly changing ranges repeated by hoarser and hoarser calls; the division officers each working out his salvation, doing his own exhorting, flattering, restraining of his gunners, like children in his hands.

"And I 'to stay scabbarded' here!" yelled Fellowes, shaking his fist at the sky above him, that drove him frantic by its very peacefulness. The horse neighed at his voice and Kent laughed aloud, an ugly laugh that told of desperation. And in that mood, shaken from head to foot, his teeth set, he reached the little town. Instead of hitching the horse he took it to the stable, a significant action

THE WIFE'S REWARD

not lost on the pair of eyes watching him from the drug-store across the broad unpaved street.

Fellowes stood a moment looking at the knots of excited men before each flaring saloon. His life was his own to throw away if he chose! But even as he piled fuel on the fire of his despair, he suddenly became conscious that there was no answering flame within him, no genuine desire for drink's respite. It would be but coaxing embers into life if he did evil that night. Half stunned by this self-revelation and too excited fully to grasp its tremendous import, he started slowly for the post-office.

"Oh, Cap'n, hyar's two telegrams fer you, sah, an' dey's marked 'rush' de gent'man at de pos'-office says;" and there stood Mammy breathing heavily before him.

"What are you doing in town this time of day?" he asked coldly, suspiciously; showing his repugnance to a presence beside him that night so foreign to his mood. An influence impossible to ignore absolutely, or to get roughly rid of as he might have any other of the servants. He stood and looked at her affectionate smile, helplessly. Then bethought him of his telegrams, and with her at his heels, he went across the street to the little

PEACE AND THE VICES

stuffy, oil-smelling public parlor of the only hotel in town, and tore the first one open, and leaned over to read it by the smoking lamp.

He read and reread and still found incomprehensible the contents:

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 25, 1898.

*Lieutenant Kent Fellowes, U. S. Navy, Los Ojitos Ranch,
Seeley, California.*

Promise not forgotten.

GRACE TITTERINGTON.

Bewildered by recent mental stress he stood erect a moment and stared blankly at Mammy; then suddenly remembering the other despatch he opened it, and the gates of life swung open before him, and night was day, and all things right in the world! Addressed like the other, this read:

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 25, 1898.

Remainder of suspension remitted. Proceed immediately New York. Report Commandant for duty on "Indiana."

MORGAN, *Secretary.*

The great, almost overwhelming, revulsion of feeling, made him stagger for a moment, and Mammy feared she had been too late, with all her almost uncanny intuition to help her. Then he

THE WIFE'S REWARD

sprang forward and took the astonished old woman by the hand, and tears of pain stood in her eyes when he let it go.

"Dear old Mammy Lina! I want you to come home with me at once. I have news, great news—I must talk, I must talk it out or I'll go mad! As you've got the mail, we'll go at once."

"Well, Cap'n, I cum in de market-wagon wid dat deah ole Ah Song. I—er—I'se got de same misery I gets eb'ry spring in my lef' laig, an' I cum toe de 'poth'cary shop, sah, fo' ter have my green pills made up, yas, sah." Whenever she had accomplished a rather special thing in lies, she always reaffirmed her statement at the finish.

Fellowes hustled her across the street to the stable where a somewhat astonished boy brought out the horse and buggy, not yet unhitched. Then he bundled her in, crying:

"Hang Ah Song! Hang the market-wagon, home you go with me!" And she scrutinized him closely and sighed, thinking that the poison was somehow already in his veins.

The lounging farmers called out after him their disappointment at having no chance for a word, to-night of all nights, when the whole countryside was in town, wild with excitement at the news. But

PEACE AND THE VICES

heedless of all but the one supreme piece of news he had to tell Dora (now returned to him on a great wave of tenderness) he sent his horse flying down the street, and out into the blackness beyond; and Mammy hung on for dear life, catching her breath, what between the dust and the speed. She only hoped the long drive home through the cool night air would quiet him a little before they reached Miss Dora.

"O Mammy, Mammy! it's such a good glad old world, isn't it?" he exulted, innocent of her maligning thoughts.

"I ain' seen no tick'lar change, sah, since I went over dis road befo'," she answered with resentment.

"It's the happiest day of my whole life!" he went on, his eyes running far ahead in their impatience.

"Shorely, Cap'n, not countin' de mawnin' yer done took Miss Dora fo' yer very own!" the woman remonstrated peevishly.

He had received many telegrams and she had never seen him like this.

"You mustn't be scared, Mammy dear, if I give one great grand shout, that starts from my toes, just to keep from bursting with joy!"

THE WIFE'S REWARD

"Yell away, Cap'n, if it's any sorter comfort ter yer, honey," she said with a sob and a snuffle, thankful poor little Miss Dora was not there to hear him rave.

Then he asked her why she was so unhappy, and after some hesitation, she told him. And there was a short silence, and then gravely, like himself, he told her the truth; and a little later the two arrived home in a perfect gale of laughter and loud talking, which Dora heard with dread and slipped out to the gate, with eyes so full of pain, that Adele went at once to her room with a sinking heart.

But once realizing that it was Mammy with her husband, she knew all would somehow be well, and stood and wondered how it had come to pass. They had not even missed her.

And then Kent went to his wife and put his arm about her, and directed their steps to the hammock, swinging ghost-like under the pepper-tree. Seating her gently in it, he knelt on the soft deep grass beside her, his head upon her knees. She had known the instant that he touched her that he had not been drinking, and she waited for him to speak, her hands lying softly on his head. Then he looked up, and kissed her and drew her white shawl more

PEACE AND THE VICES

closely about her with his old tenderness, and he whispered:

"I owe everything to you, my wife—every good that has come to me, every evil that has been kept from me. And to you, on my knees, I bring your reward; for that, I know is the dear, unselfish way you'll look at it."

"Reward?" she whispered.

"Dora, Dora, my darling—my sentence is remitted! I am back on the active list and war was declared to-day!" he burst out, not meaning in the least to tell her thus brutally, but borne off his feet by the fact itself and the strong sense of haste imposed by the wording of the Secretary's order.

She raised both arms above his head, and sobbed out:

"Thank God! O Kent, thank God with me! If He had asked me what I most wanted I should have said exactly that! To have you back once more in the midst of— Kent!" she cried suddenly struggling to her feet: "Kent, what was that you said just now? War is declared—did you say that? And you go at once? Let me see the orders—quick, let me see the orders!" He lighted several matches and held them bunched while her eyes flashed over the open telegram of the Secretary.

THE WIFE'S REWARD

"What does 'immediately' mean?" she panted.

"Within twelve hours," he said; and then took her into his arms and sought to comfort her. Fighting down her own terrors at a cost to herself that he never knew, presently she said brokenly, with now and then a little laugh, dabbing at her eyes impatiently:

"Dear, I want you to understand and remember after you are gone that all these silly old tears are from pure excitement. I want you to go! Do you suppose I'd let you stay away out of it! Why, I'd hate you if you were not mad to go back into it all, and have your chance with the rest! Life is something more than three meals a day, isn't it, dear? There are great big moments of living that sweep one's soul clean, aren't there, Kent? And you will be the happier, the better, the stronger for it, I think. Who is it says: 'Go seek thy peace in war'?"

"My love, my brave little wife," he murmured with hidden face, "I shall with your help—and heaven's—never again betray your trust and my country's—I know it to-night!"

Then she felt her control slipping away from her, and she reached into his pocket for the mail and scolded him, and bade him take it in to Adele, who

PEACE AND THE VICES

knew the China mail was due; and so she bought a moment's solitude. As Kent rose to go, she said:

"Do not tell her the news that war is declared. To-morrow will do. Let her be happy with her letters. Warn Mammy." And while he was gone her repressed agony found vent, and the quiet night stooped and held her in its arms.

"Dell, Dell, where are you?" called Kent through the house.

A voice from above replied and the girl ran down the stairs.

" 'Cherries are ripe,
Cherries are ripe,
But baby shall have none!' "

he teased, holding several letters high above her head.

To his surprise her eyes filled with tears, the corners of her mouth went down like a hurt child's, and she made no attempt to reach her letters.

"Why, girlie, what's the matter?"

"I—I thought he had not written," she whimpered. Kent laughed and took her by the shoulders and led her to the sitting-room lamp and looking into her quivering face, he exclaimed:

"Well, Leigh Robb has really captured you,

THE WIFE'S REWARD

hasn't he? And he holds you in his hand here, there, everywhere, you little rascal of a woman! He's a brave man, and a Prince Hal for self-confidence to trust you."

Adele was once more the pretty malapert, and smiled up at her brother-in-law from under heavy brows:

"Trust me? Here? He knows Ah Song's the only bachelor on the place. Why, Kent, if it wasn't for a few old photographs, I'd forget what a marketable man looked like!"

Kent shook his head at her and his happy laugh told Dora that her sister was with him, and even amidst her tears, she smiled.

"And then—" Adele paused.

"And then?" Kent mocked.

"He wrote last mail that he trusted to the all-pervading orange blossoms at 'Los Ojitos' to remind me every hour of the day and night, of—well, my fast approaching fate." Then he gave her the letters and she flew to her room, singing as she ran. And Kent went out once more to his wife, to whom quiet had come, after the quick sharp storm.

He sat down beside her and silently gathered her to him, and cheek against cheek, they slowly swung in the hammock together under the trees. The

PEACE AND THE VICES

silence was only broken now and then by the distant creak of the wind-mill dragging from the depths of the earth the moisture denied by the sky, which alone made all things possible in that western land. Again stillness, then Julie's little plaint hushed by Mammy's muted lullaby; a moment later the twitter of a sleepy quarrel for space in a bird's nest above them, and then once more the soundless perfumed place. Then a few notes on the piano broke thrillingly the silence, and Adele's deep pulsating voice floated out into the darkness, carrying the burden of her love and longing:

“ ‘Bend low, O dusky night, and give my spirit rest.

Give back the lost delight that once my soul possessed.’ ”

And about them Nature held all things within her laws, and worked on in silence through the night. As with Julie, so with the budding pushing leaves on the orange-trees that reached right and left to the horizon; as with the white fragrant blossoms, so with Adele full of the pain and ecstasy of a love still far from its harvesting time; as with the golden fruit coming to its full ripeness, so the wife, rocked in the greater peace of life's fruition.

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